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# IRISH STEW

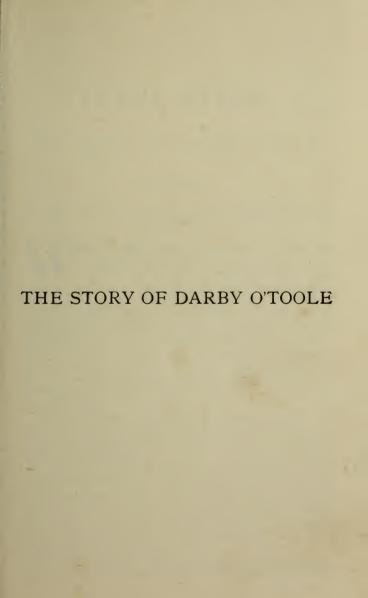
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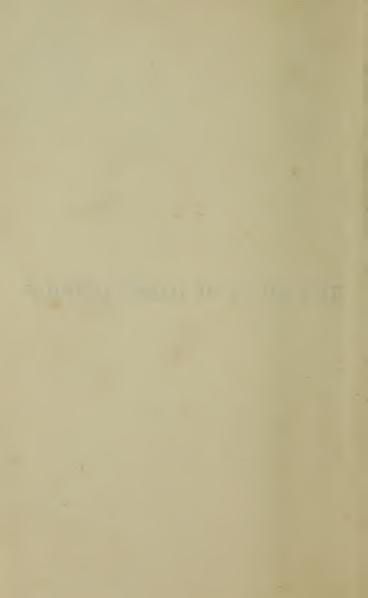
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# IRISH STEW

### THE STORY OF DARBY O'TOOLE

### CHAPTER I

HOW HE GREW UP AND SAW THE DAUGHTER OF THE GERALDINES

HEN Darby O'Toole beginned to notice the wurruld which he lived in, it dawned on him in a tumult of sphlendid frowning crests, with bare scarred sides, shlate blue and green in the sunshine, furrowed be white spoutin' streams where the thick rain fell, mist-veiled, purple and mysterious in the haze; in a vista of smooth land-locked say, an' beyond it, wild tossin' waves, comin' in upon miles of goulden sand; in wontherful many-coloured boglands, flecked with heather in autumn, full of deep pools where water-lilies grew, an' pock-marked be little stacks of turf cut out from the deep threnches.

Darby nivir knew which he liked best: to climb the stheep sides of the mountains, or clamber searchin' for eagles' nests in the pass an' watch the foxes an' the hares spring up before him; to boat on the say and catch mackerel and whiting on heavy lines, or to paddle across the wild bogs and to the brown lakes which teemed with trout, and come home drippin' to his homely dinner. With all these gran' things there was the grandest of all, his mother. She tall an' straight an' shlim, with gould hair on her like a princess, and lookin' but a shlip of a

gerril as she walked out.

The little cottage ov thim was but big stones piled up, with no morthar to hould it, an' cowld it was in winther

whin the west wind'd come schrechin' in. Didn't Honora O'Toole an' an ould man she had with her rise it all thimselves, where a rooned cabin had stood? The ould man died, an' the white hands of her that the people had stared at grew brown an' hard, for she dug her own little square of pyates, and pulled the say wrack from the beach, an' caught fish enough to live on herself from the rocks, or out in a coracle, if she got the loan of one from the neighbours. She wore but the common short skirt an' a shawl over her goulden head, and yet the Connemara wimmin was afraid of her an' nivir made free with her. She'd go to no wakes an' no weddin's, excusin' herself always, an' times she'd climb the high hills or the Pass of Salruck an' look out, out, shadin' her eyes up towards Mayo; an' the eyelids of her would be red an' she comin' home. An' times she'd go to the little wild graveyard an' kneel there prayin', prayin', with all the sorrows of the wurruld on her face.

All this time Darby was growin' big an' sthrong an' tall, for his mother she nivir stinted him. She tramped to Westport once, and she came back with a cow, an' with that an' a sheep or two, an' the fish they cot, an' a goat, they got on. Whin Darby was tin he was straight an' strong an' able to do a man's work, but he was the wild lad always, an' 'twas off he'd be for eggs, up the crags, or into the muddy lakes across the Killeries, or snarin' the white trout in the river, or shwimmin' in the say when his mother was workin' patient and quiet in her gardin or out catchin' his dinner be the say. Some larnin' she gave him, strange larnin' that none of the neighbours knew, an' he was the light of her eyes, was Darby.

At fifteen there was none like him about. He had red-gould hair and honest deep blue eyes, an' the mouth ov him was tindther an' sweet like his mother's; but the big square chin on him would stick out like a bull-dog's,

an' 'twas ill crossin' him even thin.

Didn't he whip up Mikey Joyce and Patsy Mortimer, an' he to find them dhrowndin' a little puppy, an' with one undther ache arm he walks them along the cliff edge

till 'twas deep and straight below.

"Let ye taste it for yeselves," says he, and dhrops thim in, an' whin he saw nayther could swim, he dives off the rock an' pulls thim to land. "There!" says Darby, says he. "Was it good to be lookin' for breath?" says he, an' he sthrokes the little whimperin' pup an' takes it home.

He was the ill boy to cross, an' the brave boy to help ye, but though all the gerrils'd look up an' smile he

nivir noticed wan ov thim.

Faix, they knew there would be murther if he came coortin', for he had not a penny of value but the cow an' the calf, but they'd have risked it all if he'd look

their way.

When the sthorums came in winther, whippin' the say to a track of foam, an' outside the harbours it piled up green an' terrible, ye could not kape Darby in. His mother'd sit watchin', waitin', down on the shore herself till she'd see him come on the rocks back to her, an' thin she'd smile tindther as a gerril.

The cake'd be baked an' a egg ready—'twas a big cake Darby wanted. "An' thank God ye're home

to me," she'd say, "Darby asthore!"

But one night, when all the wurruld was howlin' mad, whin the say was heaped up from its bed over rocks that nivir felt it, an' the sthreams were pelting down the hills with the roar of rivers, an' ould Mywl Rhea was hid in the great mists, Darby did not come. The neighbours passin' gave Honora comfort—"The wild felly was off across to Mayo, maybe, and could not cross back"—for they were sorry for her, an' she waitin', waitin', with the heartbreak in her eyes.

'Twas near to midnight whin Darby came in. He was cot in the wind, and he had walked around by Leenane. But for once Honora did not smile, but sobbed an' cried bither with her goulden head on his

wet coat.

"One Darby was tuk from me be threachery an'

the soord," says she. "Let me kape the other. Oh, let me kape the other—"

"Be the sword?" says Darby, quick-like. "Was that how me father wint, mother?" says he.
"Yer father," she says. "Ah, nivir mind," an' puts bread before him an' biles tay; but Darby would hear it all. Eighteen he was then—sthraight an' tall an' sphlendid.

"Nivir one wurd did you tell of me father, mother," says he, "but before I break bread I will hear now."

Thin she up an' tould him. How that she was a dather of the O'Neills, that had a gran' castle away the far ind of Mayo, an' married Darby O'Toole, his father, an' she but a shlip of fifteen. The gran' place they had with cows an' sheep an' pigs an sarving-men an' wimmin, an' life was as gould to them as the mists of Mywl Rhea whin the sun'd catch thim. But there was wickedness in the wurruld. Before she married, the Earl of O' Shannassey sot his eyes on her and came coortin'. A big black man he was—Dermod Dhu they called him—an' the sthrongest man in all Ireland. But though he came on a black horse, with silver thrappins' an' a goulden bit, she wanted none but simple Darby O'Toole, with blue eyes and deep red hair, "the same as ye'r own," says she, "though not so big as ye, Darby-not so big."

He swore revenge, did the Earl of O'Shannassey. And then God sent him to the wars, and happy Honora thought 'twould all be forgot. But when he came home he rode over, smilin' an civil, with a throup of wild

soldiers at his back."

"Twas a morn in August," says she, "an I was all in white, lookin' out with ye'r father at the goulden corn. The house was sthrong, an' there was plenty min betune that an' the O'Neills; but seein' him come smilin' they called no one. He rode up, an' a great bow he med, an' he passed the top ov the mornin' to us.

"'An' will ye come out, Darby O'Toole?' says he,

'to sphake to me?'

"An' he walked out," sobbed Honora, "with the sun shinin' on the hair of him, that was like the ripe chestnuts whin ye'd split the husks, an' the blue eyes of him honest an' trustin', an' I waited, Darby, with ye in me arrums, thinkin' Dermod Dhu'd come in-I can see it yit," says she, "the cornfields yelly all around—it was August thin—an' the turf sthacked agin the winther, an' a' the mountains clear ov mist. But whin he got close to Black Dermod, the heart in me turned to sthone, for I saw the steel flash in the light ov the sun.

"'That for the gerril ye sthole from me,' he cries-' that's what O'Shannassey gives to thim that

cross'm!'

"An' down wint me man dead an' sthill, the blood flowin' from him bathin' the feet of Dermod's horse. An' I saw the tin min that follyed O'Shannassey were but a few, for out were comin' more an' more an' more. They shwooped like hawks into the house, they pulled me, sthone sthill, to the side of me man; they burned the house before me eyes, an' the corn an' the hay, an' I niver moved.

"'Do ye see, Honora O'Toole?' says O'Shannassey,

says he.

"' I see,' says I. 'An' may the sight blind ye yet,

Dermod Dhu, says I.

"He led me away to the sands. He put ye an' meself an' old Shamus in a canno and shoved it off. But he swore if ever we came again to Mayo that he would do to me father an' mother an' brothers even as he had to me. An' I know not if he killed thim or no," said Honora, "for the raison was near to leave me. It tuk us two days to get here, and the neighbours sheltered us till we put up the house. But I nivir tould ye, Darby, me son, for fear——" An'she shivered.
"For fear," says he, "that I would kill Dermod O'Shannassey. An that I will do," says he, "before

the wurruld is a week oulder."

"I heard tell he was blinded," whispered Honora.

"Oh, Darby asthore, I will lose you too. An' yet I'm

glad ye know," she says, proud-like.

The great wind died in the night, leavin' the say torn and wild with the batin' ov it, an' the wather sphoutin' down the hills, an' ould Mywl Rhea with his head covered in the mists; but Darby was away before the sun was over the crest of the Bens down on Loch Fee. He tuk a bit ov bread an' his fishin' lines, an' the great pole he'd hop the sthreams with, an' Honora sat quiet spinnin' wool at her door—a quare light in her eyes.

Darby had his own coracle, an' he rowed the Killery an' left it there, an' then away across the sands an' the sandhills. There were places his feet sunk, an' the water below sucked at him, and places where was firm an' goulden, the blue waters dancin' down on it, an' the say birds an' the cormorants coverin' the black rocks. cut off a corner over the dhry hills of sand, all white an' shining, with little shamerogues (shamrocks) runnin' over the sand, an' the coorse grass wavin' dhry an' burnt, his feet marks plain as he wint, an' the rabbits scuttlin' before him. Always he kep' the coast close to his left hand, with the waves batherin' down on the sands. Times he'd dip into valleys with sthreams rushin' through them, leapin' from rock to rock afther the flood, an' the heather-bells pink an' red an' purple spreadin' over the ground. Twas not gone yet, it only being September. Darby would swing across the sthreams on his pole more for fun than becos he minded the wet. Whin he was hungry he fished off the rocks, an' the lucky finger bein' with him he never missed a catch; thin he'd ask for a bit of turf from a house, an' kindle a fire with the driftwood, and take a drink of wather, for he would not eat the bread the people offered him, kindly meant though it was. So he shoved on an' on, through whist places where he knew the fairies were whispering behind the rocks an' the heather; sleeping close to the say, for he would be away from the little people, an' they will not walk upon the sands. On and on till he came to a country full of deep rivers an' broad

dykes, an' a desolate look upon it all. There was corn growin' gould in the sun, an' turf stacks piled, an' grasscocks med up, but near these 'd surely stand the ruined walls of a cabin, with the black fire upon the stones. Very hard the face of Darby grew an' very set as he travelled the land. He come at last to the brow of a sandhill all sprinkled gould with shamerogues, an' saw a gran' castle sthandin' grey an' cowld, with a moat around it, an' a high wall behind that, an' a lot of small cabins gathered inside the wall. Away further he could see many trees an' the glimpse of a house amongst them, an' close to that, further on, a smaller castle. Then the heart lepped up within him, for he knew 'twas there his father had lived an'—died.

He was one man alone, but he walked on up to the great gates an' blew a blasht on the horn there. The place was lonesome-like, the heather outside the gate all thrampled be horses' hoofs, an' there was but one senthry settin' at the gate, a quare soort ov a uniform on him.

"An' who might you be?" he said to Darby, blinkin'

up at him.

Darby up an' tould him. He was one Darby O'Toole from Connemara, come to see the Earl of O'Shannassey.

"Then, Darby O'Toole," says the man, says he, "go home to Connemara and till thim there ye were at the doorstep of the sthrongest man in Ireland, an' the biggest—tho' ye're big yerself. An' if ye want a taste to ate," says the senthry, says he, sneerin', "I have a cowld pyatee."

Now Darby says he only took the man quiet an' aisy an' landed him gently across the yard. But faix, the man sat where he'd put him, rubbin' his sore bones, for Darby had tossed him twinty yards on to a heap of turf

the way he'd fall soft.

"Mother of Hiven!" says O'Shannassey's man,

"there is a sthronger man than the Earl on earth."

"Sit there," says Darby, movin' on. The door of the house was open too; but he sthopped, steppin' back, for there came into it suddint a tall slip of a gerril, with a gould band on her head, an' that houldin' back a cloud of hair, black as night an' soft as silk, with quare red lights where the sun'd catch it. But the eyes she shaded from the light were blue as Darby's own. She wore a white gown clingin' round her—an' Darby's heart lepped again.

"I was wearin' a white gown," his mother had tould

him, "that day."

"An' who may you be?" says the young gerril, says

she.

An' Darby up an' tould her-but bashful like-an' he threw an eve back at the man on the turf sthack.

"I am Fiona Geraldine," says she, "niece to the Earl.

What bizness have you here?"

"Me bizness is with Dermod O'Shannassey," says Darby, throwin' his head up. "An' 'tis no gerril's

bizness," says he.

"Ye are not from these parts," she says, lookin' at "Me uncle is in his chair above. He has not moved from it for a year—except when they carry him out. An' he is blind."

"Blind!" says Darby, soft-like. "Blind? Is he so

ould, then?"

Fiona shook her head, an' the hair ov her was like a cloud comin' in the dusk upon Mywl Rhea.

"They were burnin' a house," says she, "an' a flame ov fire wheeled with the wind and struck his eyes."

She spoke more scornful than sorrowful, an' all the time she looked at Darby-he so tall an' straight, with the hair on him like a ripe chestnut, an' his brave blue eyes an'sweet mouth, an' chin that belied the sweetness.

"They are big men in Connemara, Darby O'Toole," says she. "An' now come in an' ate an' then be gone. Dermod an' Breffni are huntin', but 'twould not be well for ye if they came. An' I cannot think," says she, "how Martin Coyne let you in," she says, puzzled.

"He had bizness be the turf sthack," said Darby,

blushin'.

There were rushes strewed on the floor, an' great hounds

stretched out on them, an' Darby was sthandin' with the bither revenge wakenin' in him, not knowin' what to do, when a great voice shook the castle, cryin' to know who was below.

"He's on us now," says Fiona, says she. "An' up

we musht go."

"I had to see him," says Darby.

They walked up the stone steps and into a big room, and there, in a great chair, sat Dermod, Earl of O'Shannassey. The huge bulk of him filled the chair, an' the legs of him was like oak saplin's, an' the big, hairy knotted hands ov him hung down, claspin' an' unclaspin', an' the wickedness ov him was cut in furrows on his face as deep as the sthreams cut down the mountain.

"An' who is there," says the Earl, says he, "who

with the soft voice of a Connemara man?"

Then the angry heart of Darby O'Toole bate harder than ever, for he could not kill a blind man, an' he helpless an' ould. So must his father's murder go unavenged. The bate of the say on the beach came hummin' through the winders, an' Darby hung his head sorryful an' helpless.

"Who are ye?" says Dermod O'Shannassey soft an'

civil.

"A—bye—that come to see ye," says Darby, says he, a thrimble in his voice. "Hearin' ov ye—Earl ov O'Shannassey."

The ould Earl's head wint up like a dog scentin'

rabbits.

"An' what is he like, this bye," he says to Fiona,

"that I may see him?"

"He is tall, grandfather," says Fiona, "an' straight, with deep red hair an' blue eyes an' a mouth that's—"

Darby sthopped her, for he was a modest bye, and

blushed to hear her talk of his eyes an' mouth.

"Ah—h!" says the Earl, says he. "Ah—h!" an' nodded his head. "I know ye for an O'Toole," says he, "an' for that I am an ould man and sightless, dhraw near an' shake me hand."

With that Fiona gave a little gasp. She laid her own hand on Darby's, an' 'twas like as a fleck of say-foam fell on brown turf.

"No," she whispered. "Ah, no! boy from Conne-

mara.

But the heart of Darby was heavy and sore. Would not his mother, Honora, have tould him now to forgive

all? He took a sthep nearer the chair.

"No!" says Fiona, says she. "No," she whispered quick. "I cannot see ye kilt," says she. "For if he grips ye, he will crush ye'r hands till the bones is as the soft bogs," says she, "an' hould both an' sthab ye. I have seen it done," says she, the tear-drops in her eyes. "Oh, I have seen it done!"

"It is not fit, Earl of Shannassey," says Darby, "that I should shake ye hand-for I am Darby O'Toole," says he, "whose father ye murthered. But I cannot

hurt ye, an' ye blind."

"I am ould an' sightless," says the ould Earl. "An' me sins is heavy on me, Darby O'Toole. Let the heart melt in ye an' give me a grip of ye'r hands for

friendship," says he.

Fiona was gone. Darby was comin' nearer quick, for he could not believe what the gerril had said, when he saw the shine ov blue stheel, an'it was a dagger restin' by O'Shannassey's hand. He held back then, lookin' at the great hairy hands held out, an' the smile on the ould man's face, that was as if the sun shone on the mountain rocks, an' he heard a rustle behind him.

There was Fiona, an' she held the quarter of a kid in her hand. "If ye do not believe me, hould it out," she says. "He will close his hands quick an' not know what

is in them."

"Both hands in mine," says the ould man, gentle an'

entratin'. "Both. To show ye forgive."
"Here," says Darby. With that the Earl cot the kid, and in one second 'twas pulp in his fingers for the great grip he put on it.

Darby let a groan as he saw, an' he held the kid,

strugglin', then the dagger flashed twice an' agin, but it met nothin': then Darby stood near to see what would be happenin'-so near the stheel brushed his sleeve and

stuck in it.

"Oh, ye fool, Darby O'Toole!" cries the ould man, pullin' at the kid that he held. "Would I leave one ov ye'r brood alive?" he roars. The wickedness ov him was alight in his face now, black as the say rocks, clear as the wather in the sandy pools, roarin' as the sthreams afther the rain, till 'twas terrible to be near it. He sthruck an' sthruck till Darby let the kid's leg go, an' then the ould man paused, for he knew he had not sthruck home.

"Have I pulled the arrum from him?" says he, ragin'.

" Is he dead. Fiona?"

"He is not," says Darby O'Toole, says he, an' his voice rang like the bells of a church. "I spared ye, Dermod O'Shannassey," says he, "for that ye were dark (blind) an' ould an' helpless, an' ye would have murthered me. But I am here," says Darby, says he, "an' I will spare ye no more."

The roar of the old Earl was like the wesht wind tearin' through Salruck Pass ov a winther's night. The rage ov him loosed his limbs, an' he, that had not sthud for years, reared up out of his chair, towerin' six foot six, an' more like to a big crag marchin' across the room. He came foamin' an' ragin' at Darby, an' Darby raised the sthaff in his hand and stud ready, but the sin of killin' was lifted marciful from him-for with a sudden sthagger an' a schreech the ould man wint down, sthricken be the hand ov God. An' he sthiffened at Darby's feet, his face dhrawn crinkled an' grey.

"He is dead," says Darby, says he, an' crossed himself

pious.

"He is dead," says the Lady Fiona, "an' they will kill ye, Darby O'Toole, when they come back. Breffni is Earl now," says she; "Earl in this one's place. An' worse he will be."

They went out of the room quick an' down the sthairs;

an' Fiona, she took a can ov milk an' a piece ov bread

that Darby should ate.

"I tould—saved ye," says she, "becos there was one onst that loved me, one of the O'Neills beyant, an' I up an' tould him he was me man an' I would marry with him. An' thin he came here; he went upsthairs to shake hands, an' thin before me eyes the hands was broke on him, an' I saw him stabbed—there's many have gone that way," says Fiona, sobbin'. "Many -many, for the ould Earl was the wickedest man on earth," says she.

They sat in the big room an' she tould Darby of her life: an' the love that comes but onst to a man, it fell on Darby as he listened. She tould him how she had a gran' castle ov her own, down towards Connemara, but they would not let her free to go to it unless she paid thim one thousand goulden pounds, for they had some bit ov paper agin her. And Black Dermod, the second son, wanted to marry her-'twas for that her lover was kilt-so that betune them all she lived in fear an' sadness, in fear an' sadness.

"I do wandther be the say," she said, "an' out in the boats alone, till they tell me I am no Geraldine, but a wild gerril, an' down where the ruined castle is where the fire darkened me grandfather, an' the ould burnt house of the O'Neills. There is not a place left," says she, "that is not burnt out, an' the bit of land robbed. Oh, I am ashamed to be alive," says she, "among them all. I am, boy from Connemara."

Darby sthud up. He was but a poor lad, but he knew the blood was in him, an' the love in his heart ran swift

as the tides up Mayo sands.

"Fiona," says he, "cud ye forgit the young man that's dead?" says he, lookin' down at her. "I am well

born, Fiona," says he.

She thrembled and grew red. With the dusk of her hair about her face, she sthud lookin' back at Darby an' the red brown hair on him, an' his kind mouth an' firrum chin.

"I was but a child," she whispered. "I nivir thought I cud forgit, but—but—'tis like the waves outside an' like other an' mountain streams," says she, half to herself.

"Ye cud forgit," says Darby, says he, with the joy singing in his ears. "Ye cud forgit—an' remimber. If I come back in a year," says he, "with the money to buy ye out, cud ye forgit—an' remimber——"

"I will." says she. "I will—I can. an' I will."

She shuk the dusk of her hair about her face, but Darby brushed it back. He kissed the little white hands of her, an' her smooth soft cheek, an' they forgot all as they sthud hand in hand.

An' then a great roar shuk the castle. White as the

mists on the mountain, Fiona lepped away.

"He is not dead," she said; "twas but a fit that held him. An' oh, Mother of Hiven! I hear the thrampin' of horses afar off."

Then they ran out to the walls, and there far along the coast was a great sight ov horsemen, back from plundther and huntin'. There was but little time if Darby was to

get away.

But he held Fiona's hands—they were behind the turret and the wall—an' kissed them, an' he gave her a bit of white heather he had found comin' across, an' she gave him a five-leaved clover that she put in a case of gould.

"A little woman gave it to me down on the sandhills," she said, an' Darby walked off out the great gate

-cool an' composed.

"Ye can git off the turf sthack now," says he to Joyce.
"I am obliged to ye, noble giant," says Joyce, gettin"

up.

"But if ye'll take my advice," says Darby, "ye'll wind a rope around ye'r hands and say I held ye up. For there's throuble comin'," says he, "an' I wish ye no harrum after the little push I gave ye."

harrum after the little push I gave ye."

"The Earl is nisin' inside," says Joyce, thoughtful like, listening to the great roars shakin' the place, "an'

I'd be obliged," says he, "havin' a wish for me life."

He held out his hands.

So Darby picked up a great rope and knotted it aisy as ye'd knot a silk thread, and thrun Joyce down in the sentry's house, an' he was scarce away whin with a thrampin' an' a shakin' came the O'Shannasseys home, prisoners an' cattle with them.

It was not well to see thim whin they found the tiedup man, an' the ould Earl bent and crinkled on the floor above, he half dead. "Bate he was," he said, bein'

ashamed to tell how he'd been fooled.

"The man came an' the man wint," says Fiona, sthill an' proud. "I knows no more. I came downsthairs," says she.

But looking out they saw Darby black agin the glow ov the evenin'. The tired horses was pulled out, an' down they wint in a wherril of sand away after him.

Darby seen thim comin', an' he laffed and turned inland. They galloped fast, an' before him was a great dyke of wather, but Darby set his pole an' swung across, an' they an' the horses must make around or shwim. Some fell in an' could not get out. Some whipped away to the sands, an' so it was till dark fell, for there was rivers deep an' full, an' great dykes that was playtime to Darby. An' so they losht him in the darkness, waitin' till the mornin' to folly his footstheps in the sands; but Darby he med down to the say an' walked in the ripple ov the tide, till whin the mornin' broke he was far away.

Yet not so far, for the sands ran crooked, an' the O'Shannasseys, trackin' him to the say, bate their horses on to see if they'd get him. In the flush of the dawnin' he thrun out his lines off a rock to get a fish, an' was thinkin', thinkin' however would he win Fiona, and see the pale face ov her, and the silk of her hair, whin he saw an ould woman pullin' in a canno by herself.

"Oh, wirra, wirrasthrue," says she, "I am so ould I cannot pull in the canno," says she, "an' the tide is

risin'."

"Get out, mother," says Darby, "an' I will help." With that he pulled an' he hauled, but the canno sthuck in the sand: he could make no way with her.

"There's horsemin ridin' over the hills," says the ould woman suddintly. "The O'Shannasseys are comin', Darby," says she. "They will take me fish," says she.

He was so flusthered thin he did not wondther why she

knew his name an' his bizness.

"Let thim come," says he. "I will pull up ye'r

canno first before I run."

And thin it grew light as a feather in his hands, an' he was beachin' her high an dry whin she called agin.

"They have met the soft sand," she says, "that no

horse can cross. An' back they must go.'

Darby turned thin. He had been wondtherin' where he would run to, as he saw the horses floundtherin' an' fallin' an' the throup of min gettin' off an' shoutin', an' they seen him on the bache.

"Come with me, Darby," says the ould wummun, "across the rocks. Here is me house," says she, "but they'd find ye there."

They crossed the peak of rocks, an' she opened a fringe of seaweed that hung down, so that Darby was in a cave with white sand for a flure, an' a heather bed, an' a cake ov bread an' a can ov milk beside him.

"Ye can hide here," says she, "an', Darby O'Toole, Morna by the say does not forget. Shlape," says she,

"ye are safe."

The O'Shannasseys came in time to the rocks, but no man could they find, but there were thracks inland, an' they follyed them, till two mile back they came on an'

ould woman gatherin' heather, an' that was all.

They wint back to the castle, lavin' Darby be, with no notion where he came from, for the ould man could not tell them; but Darby whin he woke could find no boat on the bache or see any little house among the hills. But he got a bit ov white heather in his bed. So he med home across the sandhills, an' thin the valleys, threadin' down heather an' little shamerogues, an' he tould his mother all—she cried bitter whin she knew her people had been kilt, and turned away—all save the words he had had with the Lady Fiona. Honora, she looked at him sweet an' sorrowful, knowin' the hour was come whin Darby had a dark corner in his heart from her, his mother.

"An' ye loved her, Darby," says she. "Loved her that is an O'Shannassey—that gerril with the dusky

hair."

"How did ye know, mother?" says he.

"I am a woman, me son," says she, "an' have seen a man and men in love. There are sweet flowers grow on dark hills," says Honora, says she. "An' there's me blessin' always with ye, Darby, me son."

Thin Darby, whisperin', tould her all.

An' day be day he toiled be the say, with always the thought on him how could he ever come be one thousand

goulden pounds.

The Lady Fiona waited in her castle, an' Darby cot a fish be the say, an' walked all the way to Di'mond Hill an med a necklace of the clear sthones, an' put by pennies at times in a box he had, but he feared that he would nivir have the right to see the gerril with the dusky hair agin.

### CHAPTER II

#### HOW DARBY O'TOOLE FOUND THE KING'S DAUGHTER

"I am a Princess," says she, "that lay in a silken bed and never walked but in the garden, but . . . I would be happy here," says she, "below in ye'r cabin."

She looked wistfully at Darby, but Darby's eyes were away so where lay the Mayo sands, an' he scarcely heard her. An'

the sighed verra deep.

F ye go up the pass at Salruck in Connemara, as ye know, ye will see the piles ov the little sthones where every man that follyed the coffins through laid a sthone for luck. An' the restin' places for the dead thimselves, whin the min failed up or down the stheep. The byes and gerrils wint away from Salruck across the wathers, an' some was driven out to Mayo; an' they dead, they come back down to rest among the stony graveyard be the say.

The great crags tower above the pass, with the aigles that ushed to nesht there thin shweepin' the air with their dark wings, an' the hares and wild foxes leapt red and brown from rock to rock as the mourners passed

below.

The wail of the keeners'd come echoin' back from the rocks, with maybe the wild gushts drowning the sorrow in their throats as they topped the hill, an' saw the little Killery, an' the wild say outside. Slabs of sthone the dead rested on, scrabbles ov rock they were berried undther, with a flat rock over thim, an' the pipes laid ready that the min might not be lonesome in the long nights. Here and there oak'd be put at their heads, an' oftener times a three planted, but scarce ever a word cut to say who rested below.

There was no road from Russ Roe in thim days, an'

but the pass to come in by.

Before the berryin' there would be the wakes, two nights always, with the ould wimmin keenin' an' the rushlights burnin'; and thin the ould min gatherin' to tell sthories till the dawn came grey to the windies.

Quare tales ye'd hear thin, ov fairy min on the mountains, an' little bint people ye'd meet in the mishts, whin ye'd look for ye'r sheep, an' sthrange talk they had there one minnit, an' if a man thought to cross himself, gone the nexht. Oh, there was quare talk there in the long nights with the voices of the keeners growin' tired,

an' the wind sobbin' outside.

Many there was afeared to go home alone in the dawnin', with the white clouds lyin' heavy over Mywl Rhea an' shweeping soft over the smaller hills, for fear ov what they'd meet outside. There was not one there would kill a hare with his gun, for they knew quare things might happen if they did. Had not Matt Joyce come mornin' afther mornin' to milk his cows, an' found the milk gone from thim, until one day he saw a hare make off across the fields, an' bein' ragin' he threw a sthone at her an' she fell, but ran on again very slow.

Matt chased her for miles, to catch her to ate, till he came to a verra wee house lyin' in a holly in the hills

that he nivir minded to see before.

He was tired thin, an' knocked an' wint in.

"Bollo Yerib" (God save all here), says he. An'he heard a groan and saw a little ould woman in the corner nursin'her arm that was broke.

"God save ye, mother, ye poor craythur!" says

Matt, an' tied it up for her tendther an' kind.

"I fell," says she; "a rock did it." An' she stared at him all the time. He was searchin' for a sthick to keep the bone straight, when he saw a hareskin in the corner, an' it dabbled with blood. An' the fear ov his life rose up in him. Thin she laffed.

"Go, Matt Joyce," says she, "go back along the hills. An'ye'r cows will give great milk in the mornin'," says she, "an' don't look at what doesn't consarn ye," says

He sthumbled out, sayin' his prayers, an' a darkness fell an' a great fog and sthorm, that whin he wint home he nivir knew the way agin, but the two black cows

gave a pail of milk every day from that on.

Quare sthories indade, an' bread and drink galore, and now Darby O'Toole, that lived in the little cottage along be the say. He used to be the merryesht of all at thim wakes and go creepin' afther the min whin they'd lave, and let a bawl at thim, till they leapt and prayed, thinkin' the fairies was on thim. But since he wint from his own country an' saw a gerril with dusky hair an' a gould band houldin' it, Darby was not the same bye at all.

He was thinkin', always thinkin' of how he could put a pound together, an' of the people he belonged to who

had been killed an' robbed be the O'Shannasseys.

Times he'd climb the high hills an' sthand lookin' out towards Mayo, as his mother did, shadin' his eyes an' lookin' up the long wild line of the baches, with the waves batin' on the sands, an' Achill islands sthanding out whin the air was verra clear. One day, Honora, his mother, found him there lookin' out.

"I think ye'r heart is there too, Darby," says she. "As mine is—what is not yours," she says, as they wint

down across the mountain together. . . .

Now there was a gerril of the Tynan's tuk sudden with a cowld; she had been thin, and coughin' for a year back, an' not to go to the great wake would be an offince. So Darby rowed out in his boat and made up the Killeries towards Leenane till he came to the

cottage an' heard the great keenin' within.

'Twas a whist sthill night in winther, with the moon clear in the sky; inland 'twas freezin', but her 'twas only soft an' cool, with the say whispering as if'twas summer. The rocks was black as night where they dropped into the say, with silver on thim whin they cot the light, an' the wathers ye could not see at all in the shadows, but hear thim, washing an' lappin'; but on

further they were white an' sthrange as if ye burnt lamps beneath them. There was patches of bent-down threes near Tynan's cottage, an' little beaches to cross, an'

streams running down the mountain.

Darby he did his besht to be himself at the wake, and there was a hurt in his throat whin he looked down at the dead gerril. For her hair was fine and black and soft, and her pale, still face pretty to see. He thought of the Lady Fiona, with the dusky hair hangin' to her knees, or maybe 'twas a puff ov smoke brought wather to his eyes. Mary Tynan was a promised gerril when she was tuk.

'Twas airly whin Darby shlipped away. He med an excuse of a long journey he had to take to Westport or Galway, with the whitestones from the Bens, and bits of marble he had polished bright; an' he was walkin' a little inland along the track to his canno, the say was silver bright now, whin he heard the splash of oars rowing soft below him

Darby shtopped, watchin', wonderin' who came so late to the wake, an' he saw four min landin' on the little bache below. Four min that nivir spoke a word, but pulled an' lifted somethin' verra heavy from the boat, and came up along the sands. As they got to the thrack. and came out in the shine ov the moon. Darby shivered. for he saw 'twas a coffin they carried.

They were no min of the place, an' Darby's mind grew

unaisy.

"Who are ye?" he says, an' sthips out from the shaddy.

"That's nothin' to ye," says one ov thim, very short

"Put down that coffin," says Darby, sthanding big an' sthraight, "for I will see who 'tis, for ye have bad faces on ye, strange min."

"An' if we do, 'tis for yerself, Darby O'Toole," says

one of thim in a quare cowld voice.

"That will be whin it is me time," says Darby, knowin' no fear. "Now put it down, I tell ye."

He nivir knew what med him lay hands on the little case of gould that he carried over his heart, or the sprig of heather he had tuk from the ould woman's cave, but the four came at him creepin' an' whin he saw their faces they were peaked an' pointed an' greeny-white an' sthrange. But they sthopped, an' cried, "Lave him," sudden as they stharted, an' raced off, sthealin' into the hills, so that in a second they were gone.

Darby tuk a big sthone in his hand. If they were fairy min, the coffin was real. An' he shmashed the wood with a tap or two, an' broke the boards away. Thin he cried out, for lyin' within on a bed of white velvet was a young gerril, with fair hair about her, an' a goulden band set with red and white jools on her head, an' bracelets on her arrums of heavy gould, an' a silver

dress about her.

"What have we here?" says Darby, an' thin he saw her breathe, an' knew she was not dead but sleepin', an' he lifted her out. His boat was below; he carried her to it, an' as they came to land the gerril sat up.
"Och. och! Where am I?" she cries with a voice

the like ov which Darby had never heard.
"I found ye in a coffin," says Darby, very gentle.

"Ouiet, little one," says he.

With that she began to cry an' to sob till he got her in to Honora, his mother, an' gave her a dhrink of hot milk

am' warrumed her be the fire.

'Twas a quare, sorrowful sthory she had to tell. She was the Princess Moira, daughter to the king of Ulsther. An'she had a sisther that was dark an' crooked an' hated her. But if Moira was dead the sisther would be Crown Princess. An' there came to Ulsther a great earl to marry the future queen. "Tall he is an' splendid," said the gerril, blushing. "An' glad I was to take him. But for I liked him well enough, Maireen, she loved him too, an' one day, laffin', she med him give her a promise.
'Ye love Ulsther,' says she, 'and will make it a good king.'

"' I will so, 'says Earl Granagh, says he.

"'Will ye shwear to marry its future queen?'says she.

"'I will so,' says he, 'if I can,' looking at me, and

shwore it, laffin, on the cross."

Oh, here's a verra terrible sthory, for from that hour Moira saw Maireen about with a quare man of the court that they suspected was in with the fairies.

"There came a night," sobbed Moira, "when Maireen

"There came a night," sobbed Moira, "when Maireen came to me, a cup of milk and honey in her hands. I

tuk it every night.

"'Drink it, sweet sisther,' says she, and whin I dhrank a great darkness fell on me, and I know no more, save that I'm thinkin' they med a likeness ov me, for as I came deep into the shleep I think I saw them bring it in, a thing ov wax. They were takin' me to Shawn Rhue," she said, "in the mountains. He, they say, is a fairy king, an' I would nivir have been seen again, but shut away in the mountains inside in the rath," an' she cried a little, being wake an' sick from the inchantmint

they put her undther.

She was a gran' princess, but she slep' sound that night in the little room at the cottage be the say, an' with mornin' light, wasn't she up merry an' gay, in a red skirt of Honora's, an' a shawl about her shouldthers, an' she out to see the ould black cow milked. An' dyin' she was to thry her own hand, but the cow kicked her, an' she laffed verra much. She was merry as the waves dancin' in the sunshine, an' sweet as the honey the wild bees gather from the heather. There was nothin' but her feet troubled her, for she could not walk in the silver shlippers on her, an' Honora's strong brogues hurted her, but she bore thim brave an' gay, an' to see her atin' a salt bit of fish an' a biled pyatee for dinner, ye'd say she nivir had betther.

No hurry she was in at first to get home. She wandthered off with Darby to see the Connemara bogs and hills. Brown and bleak they were now, but she loved the sight ov thim. Darby tuk her across the hills to the watherfall where the river comes in a great slide

of clear brown wather till it breaks into a mass ov torn foam below. He tuk her up be the still pools to where Loch Muck is gathered in betune the hills, deep an' dark, an' on to Loch Fee, stretching long and wide and quieter than Loch Muck, bein' sheltered from the tearin' wesht winds. But even there, there were waves plashing on all about the brown sthones, an' the little island an' over the gravel baches where the fish sphawned. An' he tould her how in still days in summer ye'd see the saamon an' the big throut leppin' in the deeps, an' the little ones dimplin' the shallows, an' how with a line he had cot thim; sometimes even a great silver saamon'd take a sprat from anear the shore.

There was fairies about Loch Fee, he tould her. Little people on the islands an' on the hills; an' in one place the Danes had a fort made, an' in another rough shelters an' places for sthores. An' thin, they wint away back over the hills to where the say came lappin' in among the sayweeds, cowld an' soft. An' the Princess she loved it all. An' her glass of milk, that if she knew, left Darby none, an' the hot bread baked in the sthones. Whisht she was an' white whin she came, but in a week there was roses in her cheeks, an' the laff of her was clear as the sound ov wather droppin' on the sthones.

An' often she looked at Darby with his red-brown hair an' blue eyes, an' then she'd sigh soft. For he had the soft tongue of Connemara, but he showed the blood in him above it all.

An' thin there was talk of her gettin' home to the king's palace away in Ulsther, but with wild winds of February blowin' Darby said they could not travel. For he had no money to buy a horse, an' the neighbours, seein' the merry shlip of a gerril in her short skirt an' her shawl, sure they laffed at her bein' a princess, and thought 'twas some foolishness ov Darby's, he bein' always mockin' thim.

"But I will take ye home," says Darby, says he.
"For ye are but light," says he. "There is a good pony I can borry," says he, sighin' thin, for he knew

the pounds he would pay for it. "An' I will walk."

says he "an' guard ve."

The morning before she left she was away up the pass, an' at the top she sthopped. There to one side was the Killery clear in a pale sun, an' beyond the big Killery, with the grass worn where the coffins sthud as they landed from the boats, and beyond that Leenane.

"An' I will nivir see it agin, Darby," says she, "but the wild land of me own kingdom that knows no softness. I am a princess," says she, "that lay in a silken bed and never walked but in the garden, but . . . I would be happy here," says she, "below in ye'r cabin."

She looked wistful at Darby, but Darby's eyes were

away to where lay the Mayo sands, an' he scarcely

heard her. An' she sighed verra deep.

The ould pony was ready below, the price ov it paid out of Darby's little bit he had med with marbles an' with diminds. An' a sate med on it for Moira, an' before her wrapped up the dhress she had come in, an' her silver shoes an' goulden crown. An' she clung around Honora sobbin' pitiful. For "Oh, I will nivir be so happy again," she cries; "nivir—nivir."

"But ye are a great princess," says Honora, cryin'

too, an' ye're duty is at home."

So they rode away, Darby walkin', his sthaff in his hand, an' Moira in her common gownd; an' the neighbours laffed, wondhering who she was.

The long, long road 'twould be, an' the heart grew sad in Darby as they turned inland, for thim that is borrn

be the say grows lonesome without its music.

Long toil there was over the little paths on the mountains; down across the bogs, with the cowld wind an' the rain, an' the sunshine. An' they both lookin' back sad, where the mountains' feet ran into the flat rich lands, an' the hills that they saw in front were only humps ov airth.

Darby had not much money, but he paid for all they had. He was not afeared out in the counthrey, where he'd put a bed for Moira in the cabins, but he was in the towns, where there was soldiers, an' dhrink and wickedness, an' all eyein' the sphlendid man an' the butiful

gerril.

Twice he fought min that thrun an eye on Moira, an' the shake he gave thim taught thim sense; an' once they were follyed an' sot on be robbers, creepin', creepin', with waypons in their hands. An' Darby with only his sthaff. But he put Moira behind him, an' he struck the first a blow that broke the wrists on him, an' he cot the second an' just thrun him into the river near by, an' the others screeched "Giant!" an' ran.

An' agin, worst of all, late night came on thin, an' only a gran' castle in sight. There was a cowld rain fallin', an' the catchin' damp ov inland med him shiver. So Darby had to knock at the gate. Afeared he was when he saw the red head an' the wicked eye of the chief within, an' the look he thrun on purty Moira. But he purtended nothin', only lay awake all the night, an' found out there was but tin min in the castle, and two he hurted a little whin they tried to boult him into his room. An' in the morning he offered paymint, an' he whispered to Moira that the ould pony was grazin' below, an' to catch it an' ride off, but to go on fasht whin she got outside, an' not come back, no matter what he said. An' thin he cried out that he had losht fifty goulden pound, an' "Sisther," says he, "ye know where 'tis on the road we came; ride back," says he, "an' git it, an' take a couple to help ye."

It plazed the wicked ould chief well. He towld the min to take the money and bind Moira, while he dealt with Darby, an' he laffed at Darby for a fool all the

time.

So Moira ran out, cryin' she cud find the money, an' up on her pony in a minnit, an' the min ran with their heads down, huntin' for the gould, but she throtted away, on and on.

Darby schreeched, an' he roared after her so loud he tuk thim all in. Thin sudden an' swift he sthud back and lepped the moat an' ran afther her, an' cot her a mile on, so that whin horsemin came afther thim they had hid up the hills an' walked across another way an' got

safe away.

An' often Moira would talk an' talk tellin' Darby ov all her life, an' its grander, with her eyes on the fine brave face ov him, an' a sigh on her lips. An' she'd whisper of Connemara, an' "If—ye cud go back there a great man, Darby," says she onst.

Times too, Darby'd look at her an' think how lovely she was, but his heart was firrum with Fiona Geraldine, an' a poor bye had no bizness to look at a princess.

Thin came a day whin the lasht coin was gone, an' the ould pony tired, an' Darby had to sell the little goulden case he wore over his heart, an' the tears was in his eyes whin he offered it at a great house, and got bread and milk, for he musht take Moira home.

It was April, with the little primmeroses pale gould on the banks, an' the willow tassels hangin' pearly green, an' the green shoots on the blackthorns, an' blue skies overhead, whin they climbt up a hill—there was great proud hills in the land they'd come to now—an' there, down below them, was the King of Ulsther's castle.

A big, wide, silver river ran beside it, smooth an' deep. Mountains threw their creshts up tall an' sullen, great woods climbin' their sides, but was all proud an' fine

without the shweet wildness ov Connemara.

There was a sight ov cattle an' horses an' sheep an' goats, an' soldiers gallopin', an' flags flyin', an' the music of harps risin'.

The two med down into the valley in among the crowds.

"An' what is all this?" asks Darby ov a man.

"'Tis a weddin'," says the northerner, short an' sharp.
"The future Queen of Ulsther, the Princess Maireen, to

the Earl ov Granagh."

"He did not wait long," says Moira shlowly, "not long. Oh, we are but jusht in time," says she; "though maybe he'd be punished worse an he wed to Maireen."

Thin she flung up her head an' she laffed.

There was a house by with but an ould woman in it,

and she wint in. In tin minits she was back with the white silken gownd on her, an' her hair all loose an' the gould band holdin' it, but the brown hands of her looked quare agin the white ov her gownd.

Then "Come, Darby!" says she, an' throwin' on her shawl they hurried across to the ould sthone church where a great crowd was gathered, an' the soldiers shoutin' to the crowd, "Kape back," for the King was comin'.

A splindid-looking man he was, an' a fine young man ridin' be his side, an' behind thim again, ridin' on a white horse, the Princess Maireen; but she was crooked an' brown an' ve'd nivir say sist her to Maira

brown, an' ye'd nivir say sisther to Moira.

"Back!" cries the soldiers. "Back!" For there was priests and harpists an' strangers come to the

weddin'.

"Make room," said the Princess Moira, says she. An' they turned, surprised like.

"For who?" they cries, angered an' furious.

"For the Princess Moira of Ulsther," said Darby, says he, an' the great soft voice of him rowled over thim like a big breaker on the rocks. Paralysed they was an' shoutin' whin she thrun away the cloak, an' in silk an' silver an' gould with the sun shinin' she med up the aisle. An' the soldiers tried to sthop thim, but Darby he shuk a few, gentle like, so that they sat down gaspin' for an hour.

"What is this?" cried the King, hearin' the commo-

tion, an' he looked an' he shuk.

"Moira!" he cries. "Her I saw dead in her coffin!"

"'Tis a witch," cries the priests, an' they crossed themselves an' thrun howly wather; but Moira walked on, her head up an' her face set hard. She bowed low to her father. An' thin she turned to the brown sisther that was shakin' in the silken dhress.

"Sisther, was it well done?" says she, proud and scornful. "An' ye, me lord? An' ye marry so soon," she says to the fine young man, the Earl. An' thin they

knew 'twas no witch.

Well, with this an' with that, such a hubbub an' a

bawlin' nivir was. But afther a time they listened to the Princess an' to Darby, an' the weddin' was over an'

done with for the day.

Cryin' bitter and terrible, they led Maireen away to shut her up with howly nuns. An' whin Darby saw the princess agin, he was brave an' splendid in a nobleman's suit, an' she, all in white and silver, was sitting on an oaken throne be her father's side.

Darby bowed to thim aisy like. 'Twas hot in there, an' he knew he would not like to be a king in a palace.

"I hear, Darby O'Tcole," says the King, says he, an' then he tould it all out. How Darby had minded his gerril an' clothed an' fed her, an' sphent his money on a pony to bring her safe an' sound, an' nivir a word all the time but as from a brother to a sisther.

"An' what shall we give ye, Darby O'Toole?" says the King, says he. "Gould," says he, "or a place in our court as a general," says he, "to lead our soldiers?"

The eyes of Darby brightened an' darkened, for first he thought of leadin' min, an' thin ov a cloud of dusky hair an' a gerril waitin' on the sands of Mayo.

"I will take what ye give me, King of Ŭlsther," says he. "An' take it home to another. But I cannot sthop

here," says he.

With that the Princess Moira's eyes clouded up, but

she said nothing.

But they would not let him go yet. For there was feastin' and dhrinkin' an' a great dance in the hall, an' talk ov the witchcraft that carried Moira away; but often whin Darby saw the fine min dhrinkin' till the sinses left thim, he'd only long to be back home with a big bowl ov milk before him, an' the wesht wind blowin' sweet across the say.

So in time he tuk his leave; but before he wint, he was sint to see the princess. She was alone in a round room, with hangin's on the wall, and deerskins under her feet, an' she was pale an' proud an' lovely in her silken gownd. An' lookin', Darby wonthered if she was the gerril that milked the cow till she'd kick, an'

climbed the mountains in thick brogues, an' laffin' in to ate pyatees an' salt fish.

There was gran' cakes beside her now, an' glasses of

wine.

"Ye are goin', Darby?" says she, with a quare smileon her lips.

"I am goin'. Moira." says he, callin' her as he had

always.

"Ye are takin' gould," says she, "an' a jool from me father; but Darby O'Toole," says she, "is there—nothin" else ye would have?" The heart leapt to his throat,

for he knew well what she mint thin.

"Me dress is white," says she, "but me hands"—she held thim out—"they are brown still from the winds of Connemara," says she, "an maybe me heart kapes memory with thim. Darby O'Toole," says she, "ye are a well-born man. Is there nothin' else?" An' she waited. "Me father laves it to me," says she

The proud, sweet blue eyes ov her were on him as he sthud tall an' sthraight, no man of his like in all Ireland. An' she was fair an' good, an' a princess. An' he would be King of Ulsther. But the long hair ov her blew out in a breath from the windy, flashin' soft brown across the sunshine, an' it brought a stronger thought of hair that was as the clouds at night, an' Darby dhrew back. But the eyes was wet in his head, an' he knelt at herfeet.

"I would not have ye kneel to me, Darby," says she

thremblin'.

"Yes, I musht kneel, Moira," says he, "for that ye are so beautiful an' so sweet; an' I will tell ye now," says he, "what I should have tould ye before." So kneelin, he tould her all, an would not watch her face.

There was a long silence in the room.

"Thin, God bless ye, Darby O'Toole," says she, "ye an' her!" but the voice ov her sounded far away. "I had dreamt," says she, "ov company," says she. "An' it is over now. For the Earl of Granagh," says she, "did. not mourn me long; yet perhaps I will take him yet.

but never to be king beside me on the throne. Good-bye, Darby O'Toole," says she, an' she pulled a little gould collar from her neck. "For her," says she; an' still ye'd say she was speakin' far away. "For her that ye love," says she.

He tuk the brown hands ov her and kissed thim soft. "For the days of Connemara," says Darby. "An' God bless an' kape ye, Moira! For if I was not

promised—" says he, sobbin' a little.

An' thin he ran away. An' onst he sthopped, for this was a wondtherful thing he was offered; but then a cloud blew dusk across the blue, an' he walked on.

Much gould they gave him thin. Five hundthred goulden pounds, an' a fine horse, an' suit of clothes. An' he rode fasht in the evenin' lesht he should sthay for ivir. The ould pony Moira kep' and fed him herself till he died. An' on the way he got his gould case back, an' med on home fasht on his fine horse. But whin he neared to the Killeries he changed his clothes back, an' led in the gran' horse, an' he'd hardly wait to tell Honora his mother, but tuk the canno out an' rowed hard away up and up till he saw the O'Shannasseys' castle in the sunlight.

An' on the sands stood a gerril in white with dusky

hair flowin' about her.

She cried out whin she saw him there, an' they sat out in a nook ov the rocks while he up an' tould her all. Ye see, he had to bring a thousand pounds before he could get her free. "But wait for another year, Fiona," says he, "An' is there one ye can trust with this to keep?"

"Me Uncle Breffni, that's Bishop of Connaught," says she. "He will kape the gould safe. An' I will say

a friend brought it to me," says she.

"An' tell thim no more." An' maybe the gould she thought would tempt thim not to force on her weddin' with Black Dermod that wanted her castle an' her lands for himself, he bein' the second son.

Well—Darby, he waited hiding among the rocks till his gerril brought him news. An' a year more ov grace

she had before they'd force the weddin' on her, and the five hundthred goulden pounds safe in the monasthry her uncle was head ov. An' they said goodbye, she an' Darby, in the dim ov a summer's night, an' but onst was Fiona quare to him. 'Twas whin he tould her all about the princess. An' she grew jealous like.

"A princess," says she, slow like, "An' was she as

purty as I am, Darby? "says she.
"She was," says Darby, quiet an simple.

"I like ye for sayin' that," says she, and turns away all the same.

"But she was not you," says Darby, still quiet an' simple. "For there was nivir another like you, acushla ma creethur—light of me heart!"

Thin she was plazed an' turned to him.

So Darby wint back to his cottage to try to airn the resht of the money for to free Fiona. An' years aftherwards he heard tell that the Princess of Ulsther was a great queen, but cowld an' hard an' proud, so that the earl she married nivir even sat beside her on the throne, an' that she nivir smiled.

An' Darby, knowin' why, sighed for her sake.

## CHAPTER III

## HOW DARBY O'TOOLE SHOT A SEAL

"But who is good enough for the likes ov ye here?" says

Darby, simple like, "who here among the neighbours?"
"I cud name one," says she, an' the great green-blue eyes ov hers met his, an' he knew. Oh, there cud be riches for him now, an' the butifulest gerril for a wife, an' one he knew would love him thrue.

HIN Darby O'Toole came back from Salruck. havin' left the Lady Fiona sthanding on the rocks, in her white gownd and her dusky hair fallin' all around her like a

cloud, his heart was verra gay an' light in him.

Five hundthred goulden pounds that'd take a man a lifetime to airn, had tumbled into his hands, an' if he was sorryful sometimes for purty Princess Moira of Ulsther, that he had left standin' straight an' white in her room in the tower, he was gladsome to think that the daughter of the Geraldines cud wait another year in peace, an' thin he was that full ov hope, he was sartin sure of going back to clap the money down an' release her, an' go to live with her in her own castle in Mayo.

"Somethin' will happen, light ov me heart," says "'Twas a blessed day that sint me to you; an'stheal to the little rock," says he, "this day twelvemonth, to see the canno comin' in weighted down with gould."

So she waved her little white hands to him, afraid all the time that some might see, an' Darby rowed away, down by the long wild baches till he drew his canno up on the pebbles ov the Little Killery.

But autumn wint on to winther; the heather in Connemara faded rusty, an' the bells wint tumbling off; an' the sun sot into a wild an' darksome wesht across a mud

grey say. An' then winther passed to spring with the whisper of growth in the wind, an' little green shoots poking among the brown, an' then primroses comin' out pale as little sthars, an' cowslips gould in the meadows, an' the brown throut leppin' in the lakes.

An' spring passed into airly summer, with soft sunshine on the land, an' the say sparklin' blue, an the min

workin' hard in the gardens.

Many, many months since Darby O'Toole airned the five hundred pounds, an' but four months to go before he might airn as much more if he would free Fiona Geraldine, an' scarce but a penny had he gother up. He grew sad as time went on; often he'd give up work an' wandther the hills, thinkin' the little people might favour him, but though he'd see the heather-bind in the dusk as they passed, an' hear the whisper ov them or the reeds about the lakes, he saw no little min or wimmin.

An' hours he wandthered on Mayo sands, looking for ould Mona's house, she havin' said she'd not forgit him, but he could see nothing but the white hump ov the sandhills an' the coarse grass above them, an' see only his own footmarks where he'd sunk in the silver sand.

So the heart grew heavy in him, an' there was sorrow bindin' his head till the neighbours wondthered what was wrong with Darby, the gay boy that used to be. An' times he'd climb the hills to sthare away to Mayo,

with all the woe in him cryin' dumb.

Where cud he ivir airn more money? Even the marble an' the dimonds from the hills was hard to git, an' not aisy to sell; the toil he made in their little garden left him but enough pyaties to ate; a boat-load ov silverscaled fishes was no vally down there, an' what else was there to do? Whin the hate ov summer came, the gentle-faced seals'd come shwimmin' into the bay, an' Shan O'Reilly ov the great house inland said he'd give a few shillin's for some of their brown furry skhins.

So Darby, idlin' then, for whin the heart cannot resht he cannot do honest work, said he'd chase an' spear one. An' wint off out in his canno, an' whin one rose with its gentle eyes an' queer, gentle face lookin' up at the blue sky, Darby let fly, an' hot the sale on the shouldher, an' saw the blood sphout an' the craythur dive, an' then he was sorrowful, for he thought it looked reproachful at him before he sank with Darby's sphear sthuck in him.

"I will not thry for another, even for their brown skhins," says Darby; "he threw the eye ov a Christian on me."

An' he rowed on, thinking maybe he'd find the craythur wounded, an' pull out the waypon, but he saw no sign ov aither.

But from that hour he cud catch no fish, an' a week afther he rowed far, trollin' the lines, till lookin' up, he saw the sky was black as ink, an' there was muttherin' ov storm, an' the say lyin' glassy an' dim with a quare heave shakin' it. There was no time to make for home —there came a rattle of raindrops leppin' on the sthill say, an'then, with a roar, the wind was at him, hurtlin' up the waves, with white noses curlin' on them, tossin' the light canno where it playsed. Darby rowed, till the great back was bruk on him, an' he could not kape her up to the wind, an' then he fixed a rag of a sail an' he let her fly across the hills ov wather, stheerin' with a paddle. Down, down he'd go on the stheep of the curlin' wather, an' see a great mountain in front, an' then rise up safe on the next. An' so it seemed to him for days, for day was black as night with the whirlin' sthorm, until it went down, the great rollers changed to a froth, an' toss that canno wint, duckin' an' drippin' till his head whirreled, an' then he heard the lap of angry wather among rocks, an' saw a little island, with a bache of yellow sand, sheltered by rocks. though he was, 'twas aisy to get the canno in, an' he pulled her up an' walked up the sand; there was quare sort of little huts there piled up agin rocks an' mounds, but only smoke in one. To that he wint, an' found a little brown man toastin' fish over a fire, that looked up as Darby came in. He had a big fierce moostache on

him, an' quare stickin'-out teeth, but kindly, gentle eyes.

"God save," says Darby sthaggerin' in. He was

soaked to the skin.

"Welcome," says the man, an' gave him a fish an' a quare sort of dhrink made from biled white sayweed an' wild honey. Then Darby saw one shoulder was sore with him, a twisht ov sayweed wound round it.

"An' are ye hurt an' alone?" says Darby, says he,

havin' med a bite ov the fish.

"Hurt an' alone," says the little man, eyin' Darby. "The others are out fishin'," says he. "An' maybe 'tis as well," says he.

"I do not know this island," says Darby, says he,

"but I will help ye now that I am here."

So Darby gother up the fire, an' tinded the little man's wound, an' ran out to throw his line for fish, an' cot more than he wanted, an' sthayed all that day busy helpin'.

"Ye are verra sthrong, Darby O'Toole," says the little man, says he, "but is it fair to use ye'r sthrength on thim waker than ye'self," says he; "an' thim that

does no harrum to any man."

"How's that?" says Darby, quick like.

The evenin' was fallin' quick.

"Ye have a kindly heart," says the little man, "I can know that now, an' yit ye spheared a sale (seal) in the bay—a harrumless ould sale that used to look at ye."

With that Darby up an' tould him ov how sorrowful he was for that same, an' how he rowed off afther the poor craythur an' made up his mind how that he would nivir hurt another, even for the money.

"An' 'tis money I want sorrowful bad," says Darby,

sighin'.

"With health an' sthrength, an' the sun, an' the say, an' the mountains, what do ye want with gould?" says the little man.

An' Darby tould him all, simple an' quiet, an' then sat stharin' in the fire with his heart heavy in him.

The red was glowin' too sthrong in it, so he rose to put on more sods, whin in the corner he saw a sale's brown skhin an' his own sphear beside it.

An' he whipt round, his eyes leppin' in his head, an' looks at the ould man's shouldher, an' back to the

sphear.

"Darby O'Toole," says the little man, "I see ye know

somethin' now."

An' then he tould him how they was harrumless fairy min that wint out fishin' as sales in the say, being able to live undther wather, an' how risin' to look up at Darby, havin' no fear, he had been wounded so bad he cud scarce swhim home. An' how he had been in

sorrowful pain ivir since.

"We are all ould now," says he, "an' in time we must stheer away to the hidden islands where min do not come. But 'twas no chanst wind blew ye here, Darby O'Toole, for we mint to kill ye or trap ye, but 'twas chanst that I was alone, an' saw the kindly heart in ye, an' now let ye go; an' there will be payce between us, for I will tell the resht what ye are."

So Darby, full ov wondther, shuk the quare little finny hand ov him, but firsht the little man gave Darby a bit ov sale's tushk that he said'd bring him luck from the

say.

"Up from the say ye'r luck will come," says the fairy

man, says he.

An' Darby rowed fasht an' found his way be good fortin', an' came home at lasht with the moon shinin' on the say, on a sthill summer's night.

Sometimes porpoise came rowlin' up, blowin' an' snufflin', an' sometimes he saw a sale's dark head, but he kep' well away from thim, not bein' sure who they was.

As he rowed in, the say light dreepin' blue from his oars, as if the moonlight was cot in the wather, was't he surprised to see three gerrils bathin' in the say, long goulden hair flowin' from thim over the ripplin' waves, an' they singin' an' splashin' like childther.

Thinkin' 'twas some ov the neighbours' gerrils, Darby

did not like to pull on, as they was outside him, so he pushed the canno up agin a rock, an' held to it be the savweed, waitin'. An' thin he saw thim lyin' on the sthone a heap of gran' feathers like a white say-bird's, an' pullin' at it, saw 'twas stitched up all together as a suit ov clothes. He grew tired thin, an' gave a big splash with his oar, an' rowed out across the bay, hard, the feathers with him, never turnin' his head, though he heard a great cryin' behind him. But he held on till he backed the canno, an' saw Honora his mother, pale an' weary, waitin' on the rocks.

"For 'twas the great storrum, Darby," says she, "an'

I was sore afeared for ye."

Darby wint in, sthiff an' tired, an' he threw the feathers careless into a little wudden box at his door. an' ate an' dhrank an' tould Honora ov all he had seen an' heard, till she turned pale agin, thinkin' how the

fairy min might have kep' or kilt him.

Well, next mornin', early, he heard a cryin' outside, an' there was a gerril sthandin' covered in a cloud of goulden hair, batherin' at the door. Honora O'Toole let her in an' dressed her. She said she losht her clothes in the say, an' come from far away, shwimmin', but no more would she say, an' verra buteful she was, pale an' sweet, with chains ov pearls about her neck, an' more ov them tyin' her hair that was too long to put up.

She ate an' dhrank, an' thin out she cum to Darby,

who wint to dig, an' held out her hands.

"Oh, give me back me feathers, Darby O'Toole," says she, "for I am the king's dather, an' I musht go home. But I cannot till I gets me suit ov feathers," she whisphers, "but musht sthay as I am, like to a human being."

"Arrah! that?" says Darby, says he, rubbin' his head with the sphade. "What!" says he, "an' I tuk ye'r dhress off the rock," says he, "to sthuff a quilt with. But ye shall go back, little gerril ov the says," says he,

an' turned to find the box.

Often had he heard of the say gerrils, that cud come up

an' play an' shwim, but musht put on their own dhress to dive back undther the wather.

But whin he ran to get the box, sorra a box was there. An' thin he rimimbered how he had promist to give a box to Connachar Joyce, that was away to Westport, an' Connachar, seein' the box outside, must have tuk it as he passed in the dawin'.

So he could not give the gerril her dhress, though she cried crool an' terrible. Human she was, an' musht stay. Who knew where the feathers was thrun now?

He tould her gintly they musht only wait, an' at lasht

she smiled out through her tears at him.

The quare thing she was, givin' no account ov herself but the fust one. For ever shwimmin' an' divin' an' callin' like a say-bird across the wather, or sittin' lonesome on the rocks lookin' out to say. But, as the days wint on, she grew quieter, an' she'd help with the house, an' thin to bake an' mind, an' sit lookin' at Darby, with the great sthraight figure of him, an' his deep blue eyes.

sthraight figure of him, an' his deep blue eyes.

"The min of the say is small," says she, one day,
"an' they walks queer an' crooked, an' there is no sunshine there below," says she; "it dhries ye, yet I love

it now," says she.

"An' there was a man below ye cared for, Drishna?"

says Darby.

"I was promist," says she, shlow like, "an' me weddin' dress, all wove of silk scales, ready. But he

was small," says she.

Yit though she seemed happy, she pined an' dwindled, an' grew thin an' pale an' white, till whin she'd let down her hair, she was like a goulden cloud passin' in the twi-

light, so light had the gerril grown.

She made no friends, an'tould the neighbours nothin', an'she would not go to mass, an' people looked quare at her, an' some ov the boys was rude to her, till Darby fought them gentil an' civil, an' they were not out for a week.

"An' if another says a wurd to Drishna I will hurt him," says Darby, says he; so faix, they let her alone.

But findin' her one evenin' down by the say, she was so whisht an' pale that Darby grew afeared.

"Is there nothin' I can do, Drishna," says he, "to

help ye?"

She turned her eyes on his. Deep blue-green they were, like the wathers in shadow on a sunny day, an' she

whispered to him:

"Î musht go back to the say, Darby," she says, "or die; that is our law below. One night ye'll think ye see a moonbeam sthrikin' on the rock, an' 'twill be me passin'. But," she laid her hand on his arrum, an' 'twas like pale white fire that ye cud see through, "if I were to marry a mortal man," says she, "an' nivir saw me feathers agin, I would forget an' live. An' I would larn to bake, an' mind a house," says she, "an' be a Christian. For that is the law ov the say, Darby," says she, "that if we are left on land an' no man marries us, we must melt away as the beams ov the moon," says she, "that flickers an' is gone."

The big heart ov Darby melted in him.

"Oh, ye shall not, me purty Drishna," says he, "ye

shall not go so."

"I was a king's dather down in the goulden sands," says she, "an' drove great fishes harnessed to a carriage med ov mother-ov-pearl. We played below," says she, "an' came up in the night—for the sunshine hurts us—to play above, an' yet I musht go—an' be nothin' at all," says she—"nothin' at all! 'she sobbed.

"Ah, no " cries Darby again; "no, Drishna ov the

say. Ye shall not die."

"No?" says she. An' looks at him out ov the great green-blue eyes that was clear as the sthill say, an' shakes

the cloud ov her hair about her an' smiles.

"No," says he, "for now I'll thramp straight into Westport, an' see Connachar, an' maybe git your feathers," says he. "An' though it's sorry I'll be, little gerril of the say, ye shall git back to ye'r fine prince that's waitin', an' play merry, below, an' maybe come up sometimes on the moonlit nights, ye an' ye'r man.

Drishna drooped her eyes.

"He has black hair," says she, shlow like, "an' he is small an! cannot walk well. An' 'tis cool an' dim below," says she. "Och," she wheeled around suddint. "I could live now among the hills an' the sunshine, with the say batin' near me dour, an' the sweet shmell of the land about me. I cud," says she, verra soft. "An' I have here," says she, "that'd buy all Connemara." She pulled at the pearls at her throat, great milky beads, palin' an' shinin'. "An' if ye cannot find me feathers, Darby?" says she.

"But who is good enough for the likes ov ye here?" says Darby, simple like. "Who here, among the

neighbours?

"I cud name one," says she, an' the great green-blue eyes of hers met his, an' he knew. Oh, there cud be riches for him now, an' the butifulest gerril for a wife, an' one he knew would love him thrue. The rich man he'd be, able to buy the big empty house on the point, an' see Honora his mother gowned in white again, happy, an' at her aise.

But there blew up a cloud, dusky grey an' brown, an' it minded him of Fiona's hair, an' he shook his head.

He tuk the pale hands in his own an' he held them

warrum.

"I will go quick, Drishna," says he; "away this night across bog an' mountain, an' find ye'r feathers, an' ye can go home safe."

He saw her eyes flash, an' she whipt the little hands

from him.

"An' if not?" she whispers. "I'm sure to melt

an' fade away," says she, sorrowful like.

"An' if not?" He drew a big breath. "I will save ye yet, Drishna," says he, an' turns sthraight, only sthoppin' for his long pole, away to Westport. Over bog an' hill, runnin' an' leppin', takin' a bite here an' a sup there, till he ran in an' found Connachar, workin' with his uncle.

"Name ov Hiven!" says Connachar, says he, whin Darby reeled off his questions. "Wait till I think." An' Darby's heart lepped, for he cud not let Drishna die, an' if there was no feathers he must marry her an' break his heart.

"Arrah, think, Connachar," says he; "there's a lot

depends on it," says he.

"I minds it now," says Connachar; "there was a bundle ov ould feathers in the box, an' it bein' too airly to wake ye, I jusht sthuffed thim same in undther a hole in the thatch above the door. Arrah, Darby, will ye not sthay to ate?"

For, with that, Darby whipped round, an' was off, runnin' over bog an' mountain, till on a fair evenin' he lighted down through the Pass to the Little Killery. He med for the roof an' found the feathers. He called to

his mother to ask Drishna.

"She is away be the say," says Honora, "an' I am afeared, Darby, she is near to death, the poor daft little craythur that does not know where she came from. She

is but a little shaddy, now."

Darby had never tould what the gerril was, there bein' a dislike to gerrils ov the say. So he ran on quick to the rocks till he saw Drishna sittin' be a pool, starin' into it, an' so white was she, being in a white dhress, she was like a moonbeam gleamin' on the sayweed. An' he was afeared she would make away before he got to her.

"Drishna!" he cries, "Colleen bawn, I am back to

ye!"

She sthood up quick and pantin'.

"An' I have ye'r feathers," said he, holdin' thim same

out.

"Oh!" says she, "Oh!" with a quare little bird's cry. "This?" She took the suit in her hands, an'when she touched them the colour came to her cheeks. She wound the goulden hair about her, an' wound the pearls about it, an' her eyes was on Darby. "An' even now," she said, "I need not go. I could live on the land, an' be

a good wife," says she, "an' burn these, an' forgit the

say."

"An' if I had not to git them, I wud have married ye," says Darby gently; "but now go back to ye'r own man, little one, for me heart is elsewhere."

So sittin' on the rocks, with the tide whisperin' below,

he tould her of Fiona away in Mayo.

"An' ye would not have let me die," she says, whin he finished. "An' even now if I burnt them, ye wud save me," she said. "There is a human heart grown in me, Darby," says she, "that will hurt for ivir."

She sthood up, a quare little twhisted shmile on her mouth. She looked up at the cottage, an' the smoke ov the fire, an' thin she smiled the quare little twhisted

shmile agin, an' shuk her head.

"Ye'r heart is too kind to take it be cunnin'," she says. "So that it cannot be yerself. I will go home now," says she. "An' maybe I'll forgit below. An' times I'll come up to look at the sunlight batin' on the heather, where I will never walk agin; an' the great hills risin'. I will come along, for the sunshine hurts the others' eyes, an' thin I will go down to the cool ov the dim green below. An' I will watch ye, Darby, whin ye are on the say. Ye may see a say-bird in the daylight, or a moonbeam in the night, an' nivir know who is by." An' Darby said nothin', for the tears was with him. "But first," says she, "I will give ye what will set ye'r gerril free."

"Now turn ye'r head," says she, "till ye hear a say-

bird call."

So Darby did, an' thin he heard a bird cry, an' he turned, an' he thought he saw a gull dive close to him, but he was not sure. There was a murmur in the say below, an' on the rocks he saw a white wool dress an' a string ov pearls on it, the pearls Drishna wore about her throat.

So Darby stood till the tide came cowld about his feet, an' thin wint back sorrowful, to tell his mother that her own people had come for the little lost Drishna, an' she

would grow well now.

Then he hastened away in his canno till he came in the dent to the rocks outside the baches, where sthood O'Shannassey's carter. He whistled twice, shrill an' sweet, till Fiona came runnin' in the dimness, an' med back with the jools, full ov the hope that had never left her. An' did her besht, but though Black Dermod's eyes were lighter, he said 'twas not enough; but he promist to give her another year, for he meant to have money an' pearls an' gerril at the ind, an' hoped she might get more.

That was all; they would not give her a quittance ov relayse, so at the dead ov even she shlipped down agin', an' lovin' Darby deeper than ivir, clung to him

an' sobbed an' cried.

"For I think they mane threachery," she said, "an' nivir to let me go honest. Bether to kape your money, Darby, an' have run away. But I had a wish for me own castle an' lands," says she.

So Darby comfuted her, an' tould her ov the little

gerril of the say.

"An' ye wud have been right to save her," says Fiona gently. "Oh yes, Darby, right. But I hate them greeny things," she said next minit, "that is like dried jelly-fishes on the sands."

An' Darby thought of Drishna's goulden hair an' great green-blue eyes, but bein' wise he said nothin'.

"But save me, save me, Darby!" cries Fiona agin; "lit ye come up an' live here," says she, "an' thin be ready to run away with me if no help comes. I am afeared to be alone here."

Darby thought awhile, an' then:

"I will," says he, "I will; they shall nivir have ye, Fiona; an' if the worst comes to the worst we will shlip away on the say, an' ye shall be wife to poor Darby O'Toole."

But his heart misgave him, for how could he give her salt fish an' pyaties, an' see her tind the cows an' bake the bread? So he sighed verra bitter, as he put out to say. Verra near too, being' cot be some ov the O'Shannassey's min that crep' down afther Fiona. All had

been watchin' to see who brought her the gould an' jools. He held in the dark to the point ov rocks, but they pulled out the cannos an' were flyin' to folly, whin, shwift an' suddint, a sthorm rose that tuk Darby out, an' blew them in, so that they cud not row on the smother ov spray. An' once as his canno flew on, he thought he saw a pale face above the say, an' a cloud of goulden hair, an' then, lookin' up agin, 'twas only a moonbeam dancin' on the sthill wather, for the say about Darby nivir rose to the quare wind that came.

## CHAPTER IV

## HOW DARBY O'TOOLE WENT TO MAYO

Fiona put the crown ov gould on Darby's head, the prize for the besht man at the sports, and—

"Have a care," she whispers-"oh, have a care!"

"A, nbe ready," he whispers back.

HIN Darby O'Toole came back from Mayo, his canno flyin' with a sthrange current, he was thinkin', thinkin' all the time. He was pledged thin to help Fiona Geraldine, dather of his bither enemies, to leave the little cottage and go to her, so that, whativer happened, he would not let her be carried off by Lord Dermod O'Shannassey for the sake of her castle an' her lands. Twice had Darby. poor as he was, been helped to great money, but he could ot thrust for the third time; and he thought ov the great gatherin' ov the O'Shannasseys, and Fiona guarded all around, an' he but one without horse or pony to carry her off with. The sthout heart in him melted and grew heavy, an' he landed on a wild bache to lie and resht among the heather. There was little flat fishes shwimming in with the tide; he spheared a few, and lit a fire with tindther and sat waiting while the fish roasted. The white sandhills humped before him with the network ov shamerogues trailing, yellow dotted, over parts ov thim, and the coarse grass on the tops, but where he lay the heather was all around, deep red and pink and mauve and purple, big bells and little, and honeysuckle trailing to the edge ov the brown little river he was by, it crooning soft to the say, and asphodel sticking up yellow heads an' blue. Away to his right there was brown bog, spread white with the bog cotton, an' a deep

lake with great bulrushes pokin' up sthiff brown heads,

an' wild ducks flappin' in and out.

The grip ov it was on Darby's heart. He thought as he rested he cud be so happy in any little house, with the say batin' in front, and the hills frownin', and the heather stretchin' over the wild land. And thin, raisin' his head, he saw he was close to a grey castle, with trees behind it, an' the little brown sthream, windin' from there, an' the say sthraight out forninst it, blue and gould in the sun.

It was Fiona Geraldine's castle, with nivir a soul in it but two ould soldiers, and all the little houses about it flattened and destryed. There was ridges an' patches where min had worked before the O'Shannasseys druv thim out.

The sight of it toughened the heart in Darby O'Toole. It was be wrong that the O'Shannasseys kept the gerrii from her own lands, an' it was be right he would win them back. He sat up, an' thin beside him he saw a tuft of white heather, pure as snow among the pink.

But 'twas so fair he would not pick it, rememberin' the story of how the white heather came to be, from the little fairy bride hiding in it till the Prince found her.

"There might be a little one within," says Darby, and got up, thramping away to his canno. An' on his way he passed a bumble bee on its back, that could not get up, its furry legs kickin', and he sthooped and righted it and put it on a rock. An' further sthill in the sandhills he came on an ould woman pickin' driftwood, and he must sthop to help her and tie up the wood, and offer to carry it home for her.

She led him off through the sandhills to a quare little

nesht ov a house.

"All that's left here now," she piped at him. "But whin ye come to live here, Darby O'Toole, 'twill be another sthory."

"And how do ye know me name?" he cries, sthartled.
"The man on the sandhill will tell ye," says she, laffing.

He took a quick look and ran to the sandhill; but whin he turned around it there was no one, and whin he looked back he had losht sight ov the house, and thin he med for the say, and though he was an hour coming 'twas but three stheps back.

So Darby rowed away and thought there was quare

people on the shore.

Whin he got in he up and tould his sthory, and Honora

his mother smiled brave and sweet at him.

"We will go, Darby," says she. "O'Shannassey is blind, and who will know me now? Unless he heard me spheak. We will go," says she, brave an' sweet, though the heart was breakin' in her to go back to where she had losht her man.

Well, to make a long sthory short, they shut the cottage and packed what they cud on their two ould cows an' a donkey, an' med off for the long road. Long it was whin the cows could not shwim, and they musht look for fords; but at lasht they saw the big tower clear before thim, and Honora O'Toole turned pale as death.

"Here we are, two people ov the Joyces," says she. "And God sind, Darby, me son—oh, God sind that we

ever win home agin!"

She had dyed Darby's red-gould hair dark brown, and stained his skhin, and tied a shawl tight about her own face. An' they chose a little rooned cottage that was near to Honora's old home; an' next day Darby, the heart in him batin', come to the castle door.

He passed Fiona in the courtyard and gave nivir a sign, but she choked the cry in her throat, seeing him there. For she had begged him to come, an' now she was afeared. Dermod O'Shannassey threw an eye hard on Darby, who said he was a Joyce from the Killeries that quarrelled there an' come to make a new home, and he offered a goulden pound for rint ov the rooned little house.

"Would ye sarve as a soldier?" says Dermod, sharp like.

"I would not," says Darby, says he, simple and

determined. "I'd rather dig an' fish," says he,

spheakin' a bit foolish.

But first—for the terrible ould man ruled all—he must see the blind Earl, and up he wint to the big room. Blind O'Shannassey was now, and twishted and gother up, with a crukked mouth on him, but he sthraited at the sound ov Darby's voice.

"And what coloured hair," says he, "has this Joyce

from Connemara?"

"Brown, near to black," says Breffni, an' the Earl was satisfied; but they tould Darby he must pay four pounds a year—a vera terrible rint; but what cud he do?

So Darby and his mother stharted to build the little cottage up and to toil outside; but 'twas winther whin they come, and from the first all wint agin them. Fish was hard to catch on the flat sands. They had no sthore for the dark days, the land was poor and sour; they had to buy pyates from the O'Shannasseys, an' the cows

grew terrible ould an' gave little milk.

Whin the sphring began to warrum the air Darby's heart was lead in him. Shmall hope could he see at all at all of ivir gittin' another pinny together. The few pounds he had melted away till there was nothing left. All he had was that he could meet Fiona, and that but seldom, for she was watched. But sometimes, in a boat he had med, he'd creep into the shore, be the way to be gotherin' weed or fishing, and have a wurrud with her. And sometimes she'd come to his cottage be the way for a glass ov milk, and thin she and Honora his mother grew to love each other, and to sit talking and hoping, be the bit ov fire, and always talkin' ov Darby.

Away Darby must take her if no help came. An' Darby said there was but the say, and he feared, for he knew ov the great four-man canno lying be the baches, an' thought of how even his big arrums would tire an'

he rowin' with two wimmin in his clumsy boat.

An' all the time the O'Shannasseys watched him, he was so big an' sthrong an' powerful, and they were jealous

of fine min. Well, with this an' with that, whin April was puffin' little white clouds across the blue sky an' throwin' down little warrum showers that she'd dhry up with the sun before they was half began, and all the wurruld wakin', Darby had no pinny left, an' no food an' no pyates to ate, an' there was nothin' left but to sell one ov the ould black cows. A little milk she was givin', but a sup; sthill it wint to Honora's heart to part with her.

"But take her away over night," says she, "to the fair. For if the O'Shannasseys heard she was to go they'd buy her for nothin'. An' sell her," says Honora, "till we can buy a taste to ate." She looked white an' thin.

So in a white foggy night Darby med away. There had been great rain, but 'twas sthopped, an' in the stillness every little sthream on the mountains was flowin', whisperin' an' plashin' in the half dark. Big mishts rowled above, and there was a quiet so great ye could near hear the growin' heather shake, an' the whisper of the reeds was like wather hissin' off hot iron. Walkin' on, dhrivin' poor ould Acushla, Darby came to a pass betune two hills with a little lake leppin' behind him, and a little river whisperin' into it, an' a big lake in front, an' all round the back of the wathers from the hills, fallin', fallin', in the sthillness.

'Twas a lonesome place entirely; but suddint like, as Darby looked from side to side, thinkin' the little people must be out in such a night, he saw a little man come where a second before there had been no one, as if from behind a great black rock.

The dawn was rising now to make the wurruld light. "And where are ye going to?" says he to Darby. Darby up and tould him, they walkin' on together be

Darby up and tould him, they walkin' on together be the shores ov the big lake, and the black cow crawlin' in front.

Thin the little man sthopped.

"Me mother," says he, "is ill an' wake, an' here in the mountains there is not one dhrop of fresh milk. An'

cud ye sell me the cow for her an' take what I can give,

the milk would cure her," says he.

The big heart ov Darby grew soft within him. But he thought of Honora his mother hungry at home, and he sighed.

"But maybe ye loves her as I lovemine," says Darby, spheakin' from his thoughts. "An' a little will kape us. Take the cow, little man, and God save yer mother."

With that the little man gave a kind of skhip, till

ye'd hardly see him at all.

"Lave saying ye'r prayers, Darby," says he, very sour, "till 'tis Sunday. There's little people in the mountain that has no use for thim same," says he, recoverin' himself. "But come, dhrive on the cow for me."

Well, with this an' with that, they wint up an' down the hills, an' be bogs an' be rivers, till they came to a little house built up agin high rocks, and high rocks around it.

"I will dhrive in the cow," says the little man, "to the baun; and wait on me here, Darby, for me mother musht not be woke." He disappeared with ould Acushla behind the rocks, an' Darby heard a nisin' from the cottage that was like a thousand little voices and little laffs that tinkled, but he thought 'twas the fallin' ov the sthreams from the hills. And sometimes he'd rub his eyes, for the cottage would seem to be rock and sometimes a cottage agin. Thin out came the little man.

"Darby O'Toole," says he, "here is the price ov ye'r

ow."

The heart groaned in Darby, for what did he git but a common little bottle, green an' sthrong an' heavy. An' he sthared, sthammerin'.

"Darby O'Toole," says the little man, "me mother

is dyin' for milk. Are ye not satisfied?"

"An' God knows I wud be," says Darby; "but, little man, me own mother is dying for food." Thin he threw up the fine face ov him. "Kape the cow, little man," says he, "and I will hasten back for Mavourneen, the

other one," says he, "an' I may not be too late for the fair yet. An' may ye'r mother live, little man, is me

"Arrah, wait," says the little man, laffing out a quare little laff that all the hills echoed. "Wait," says he, "there's somethin' *inside* the bottle, Darby," says he; "take it home an' put it down and say, 'Bottle, do ye'r duty!' an' see thin," says he, "what's within."

"Them's childther's tales," says Darby.

"And is not childther wiser than grown min?" says the little man, smiling. "Darby, the soft heart in ye has not served ye ill. There was a bee on the sands, Darby, that could not git up. There was a bit of white heather ye sphared, and maybe the little people were about ye. There was an ould woman ye helped twice, and maybe she might dance at ye'r wedding, Darby O'Toole. Now turrn around," says he, "and see if ye know the way home."

Faix, Darby turrned, and whin he turrned back there was no house, only the big rocks, with ferns growin' by them, and the dawn sthealin' up across the hills, an' nothing but the lap an' whisper of the sthreams, an' the whiff of the cowld little wind that comes keening for the

dead night.

"Vo, Vo," says Darby, stharting quick, "but this is quare," says he, an' he ran fasht till be luck he found the lakes and away with him, leppin' dykes and rivers home.

There was Honora his mother out with Mavourneen, that had a tiny sup ov milk too. An' he saw the white, thin face of her, so that the tears came sthingin' to his

eyes. For he had brought her nothin'.

"Ah! Ye sowld her on the way, Darby," says she, glad like, "an' now we can git a bit to ate, a few pyates from thim robbers," says she, "an' thin ye can git to the town. Oh, I'm glad!" says she. But whin Darby tould her his sthory, she turruned her head away. "Ye were right to save a dyin' woman," says she, thrying not to cry, for she was hungry, "but, arrah, Darby, God sind ye found no poteen be the way with the sthory

ye have.'

There was no brukusht thin but a handful of cowld pyates and a little sup ov milk. Darby laid his bottle down.

"We'll see," he says. "Bottle, do ye'r duty," says

he, thrying to make a joke.

An', murther! before ye cud clap an eyelid there was white bread on the table, an' milk an' bacon an' hot pyates an' eggs, an' a big jug ov milk, an' all in silver dishes.

First, they were afeared, and thin they tasted, an' the hunger wint out of their faces, an' they laffed with joy. But whin they'd finished Honora tuk up the dishes.

"We'll pay the rint with these next month," says she.

"We'll be due thin, and scant marcy we'd git."

There was no more hunger in Darby's house. Hot beef an' bacon an' bread an' all they'd want three times a day; an' once Fiona came, an' for her there was honey cakes, an' a gran' pie, an' sugar sweets an' pasthry. An' all was well till Honora wint to the castle to pay the rint, an' Breffni met her at the door.

"If ye have not ye'r rint," said he, "I will take that

bye for me soldier, to pay it."

Whin he saw the gran' dishes that was worth three times his rint, the black face ov his changed. An' he axed a dozen questions, wondthering where they came from, an' he had to take thim in paymint. Honora said nothin', but Darby talked to a neighbour, and thin a man was sint to spy, an' all came out. So, but a little later whin Darby was sitting down to a good meal, Breffni himself walked in and Dermod with him, an' the bottle they would have.

"But becos ye'll have no wurrd agin us," says Breffni, here is five goulden pounds. The O'Shannasseys

is no robbers," says he.

'Twas no use that Darbysthud up and talked sthraight to thim; there was soldiers outside, and they tould him, cowld an' plain, if he kept the bottle he an' his mother would hang on the minnit. So home the O'Shannasseys wint with Darby's magic bottle, and, begonnes! it brought a feast for thim all-winnerful breads an' pies an' swates, an' always just enough for the complement of people there. 'Twas the talk of the countryside; but Darby sat silent at home, black with sorrow.

For, trusting to the bottle, he had neither wurked nor dug, an' there was nothin' to ate, and nothin' left but poor Mayourneen. The little calf ov her died on thim. An' all the time weeks was passing swift. An' already the wedding ov Fiona was being prepared for; the castle was filling up, an' the O'Shannasseys rode robbin' for cattle and sheep, and brought back poor screaming prisoners tied on the spare horses, and Fiona came cryin' to the rocks, askin' Darby cud he not save her. They would but kill her if she refused to marry Dermod, that she knew.

"Let us go away in the boat, Darby," says she, shaking the great cloud ov her dusky hair, "and drown in the deep say, for I cannot say the words with Dermod

O'Shannassey, that's a robber and a vilyin."

So Darby wanted money sore, to hire a boat to take away his mother first, an' there was only the black cow to sell. So on another night he took the road, an' whin he came to the same lonesome place, who shud meet him but the same little man.

"Well?" says he to Darby.
"No, but ill," says Darby, very rueful in himself. "Is ye'r mother well, little man?" says he, afeared his second cow might be shwept.

"She is not," says the little man, "and milk she musht have," says he; "so I'll have ye'r cow," says he,

"whin I hear ye'r sthory."

Darby up and tould him all that happened, and the

little man nodded his head as if he knew before.

"Now, Darby," says he, "I have need ov ye'r cow, but I have another bottle," says he, "an' whin ye take it, sphread the shtory," says he, "that where the first

brought silver this brings gould and diminds; and this one," says he, "will only obey ye'r own voice. So I am doing great things for ye, Darby," says he, "and whin ye'r done with what's in it, say 'Back to ye'r bottle!" says he.

"But I do not understhand," says Darby, shaking his

head, for 'twas money he wanted.

"But ye will," says the little man, whipping away the cow so quick that before he cud clap an eyelid Darby was alone in the road, a bottle in his hand, an' no help for it.

He ran back quick as he cud, and tore into Honora his mother cryin' they'd hunger no more. An' with that he claps down the fairy bottle and calls out, an' next minnit he was fighting little min that bate him sound an' honest till the breath was from him, and no chanst he had agin the two with their sthick.

"Into ye'r bottle," says Darby at lasht, "into ye'r bottle!" And there was the bottle quiet and innocent on the table. Darby shuk himself twice. Honora his mother had hid in the little room off the kitchen whin the bating began, an' she peeped out, and thin he gave a big laff that near knocked the thatch off the little house. "Mother!" says he, "mother! we have thim now!" says he.

He sot himself down beside her with the blue eyes ov him spharkling, and whispered and whispered, until she laffed too, a little, but not so much, for she was wake

and thin.

But going out into the garden, what shud she find but a heap of pyates in it, and two loaves of bread, and a little bag of gould. An' she came runnin' in to say all was well with them, they could ate and live. So she walked off that evenin' an', knowin' wimmin, she tould one for a secret how they had another magic bottle now. An' go she did that night, with a heavy heart ov her, bein' afeared for Darby her son.

And the nextht day he came swaggerin' be the say,

laffing at O'Shannassey's fishermin.

"Fish!" says he. "Tis hins an' phisants I'm atin' now," says he, "in goulden dishes."

And he tould thim his lie.

Well, ov course, in two days Breffni and Dermod had it, an' they musht have this bottle too. So down they come to Darby's house, black and splindid, and tould him he musht give it up. Darby fought and he roared, and he threw a few min out so gintle they lay there for a day; but the O'Shannassey pikes were at his throat, and he give his bottle at the lasht.

"But 'twill only wurk for me," says he, afeared they'd

kill him. "Mind that, I'm telling the thruth."

An' all the time the weddin' guests were comin', and Fiona she sat weeping in her little room in the tower, seein' no help for her at all at all. Well, to make a long sthory short, home they tuk the bottle, thim two robbers, and called all their guests and laid it on the table, but the bottle nivir sthirred. And they knew 'twas true for Darby, an' they sint for him. He came quiet and aisy, and he stud up before thim all.

"Will ye have a great gotherin' the morrow's night?" says he; "and if ye give me back me other little bottle, Dermod O'Shannassey, I will sphake to this one, that's worth three ov it, and thin I'll show ye the ways ov it,

Breffni O'Shannassey," says he.

Sure they promised him, laffing in their throats, for they mint to kill Darby whin 'twas over and have both bottles, and he, bein' no fool, he knew it well from the look ov thim.

.They kep' him there, an' first there was spoorts for the weddin'—runnin' an' wrestin' an' throwin' weights. An' Darby jyned in. But with the first race he came home alone; the race was a mile or two.

"An' these are lazy min of yers, O'Shannassey," says

he, "that sot down to light pipes in a race."

An' he tuk the prize before, toilin' and pantin' an' gruntin', O'Shannassey's min came in, they having bate all the sthrangers.

"Ugh!" says O'Shannassey says he, and was near

to bate thim. "Why did ye sit down," roars he, "ye vilyins?"

"Sit down?" says one. "God help us, an' we all thrying to win, thinkin' Darby O'Toole had run away!"

An' thin they jumped. An' whin they were done Darby jumped, an' looked back at the mark ov the others.

"Would ye tell ye'r min, Breffni O'Shannassey," says he, "not to be making little marks just hopping, for 'tis not worth while to be lepping agin thim if they will not lep," says he.

So the O'Shannasseys was shamed agin, and Dermod

that could jump the besht in all Ireland sthud up.

"Now I will jump agin ye," says he, for all the strangers were laffing.

So Darby picked up his pole.

"That is good," says he, "but let us have something to lep," says he, and he wint out the gate to where the river ran deep betune high banks full thirty feet acrosst. "Here," says he, and skhimmed over.

But Dermod lepped three foot short, and crawled out drowned and dreepin', and all the chiefs an' the ladies were chokin' smotherin' their laffter, for Darby lepped

back and sthared.

"And ye call that a lep," says Darby, and goes to where the river ran wider sthill, and he tuk his pole and med over, and no one could even thry, that could not use the pole.

So, shamed and black, the two O'Shannasseys wint back to the courtyard, an' the ould man sittin' in his

great chair throwin' hard words at thim.

But scarcely had Darby lepped the river with the pole whin he thought what a fool he was, for that long ago he had run away from thim that same way. An' more foolish sthill he felt whin the ould Earl nodded the twisthed head ov him and muthers and grumbles in his beard.

"A great man with a pole," says he, with a soft voice.
"There was one long ago," says he, "but his hair was red, chestnut red," an' he nodded with the lines growing

deep in his face.

All the time Fiona watched and watched, the pale pink comin' an' goin' in her cheeks, an' her hands pullin' at her cloud ov hair. For she was afeared an' proud an' glad an' sorryful all together, an' even with the weddin' so near, somehow she hoped Darby had some plan, for if not she mint to shlip down to the say, and go into it where 'tis deep and cool be the rocks rather than be wife to Dermod.

With that the wrestling began; the O'Shannassey's min bate all the sthrange soldiers agin, but whin they were boasting ov victhry one came out to meet Darby. An' the soldiers they spun an' twisted an' fought. And whin 'twas Darby's turn, he just cot the man gintle, as he said, and put him clane over his shoulders on to the turf sthack, so that he'd fall soft.

"I'm ready now for the next," says he, "an' that one'll

resht a bit there."

A great laff wint up from the company thin, for the next man, poked out with a pike behind him, came shakin' and fair afeared, and would not close in grips but dancin' round. But Darby put out one hand.

dancin' round. But Darby put out one hand.
"Little man," says he, "there is no music for this jig," says he, and he cot him up and put him across on

to the turf sthack too.

The third man to come was that man that he had put sittin' there before, and he came up sthraight and

determined.

"There was one did that to me before," says he out loud—"a man from Connemara"; and so he too was cot, and the three lay there dazed like, and all the fine people swayin an chokin, an the O'Shannasseys biting their lips with the shame.

Thin out sthud Breffni, he bein' a fine man.

"Wrestle with me," says he, and came on sullen as a bull.

But as he was comin' Darby cot the glint of stheel in his hand, and knew that Breffni mint to give him a quick cut across the hands that'd paralyse him.

So he sthud verra quiet, but whin Breffni drew near

he med a suddint lep and cot him tight an' squeezed him till he cud not use the knife. An' thin he held him back

arrum's length.

"Breffni O'Shannassey," says Darby, "'twas not fit ye should jyne ye'r own servin' min on the turf sthack. so will ye own yerself bate?" says he.

"No," says Breffni, struggling hard.

"Thin," says Darby, and lifts him, big man as he was,

and thrun him gintle to his father's feet.

An' all the soldiers, afeared they'd be druv to fight, burst out, "Give him the prize, the prize!" And Breffni sthruggled up and tried to laff, with the black rage shwelling within him.

But the ould Earl whispers:

"Breffni," says he, "we will kill this man to-morry. And we will kill him shlow," says he, dhrawing a long breath.

Fiona put the crown ov gould on Darby's head, the prize for the besht man at the sports, and—

"Have a care," she whispers—"oh, have a care!"
"An' be ready," he whispers back, and aloud he says:

"Thank ye, Lady Fiona."

Thin Darby sthrolled down to the say, O'Shannassey's min follyin' close; but whin he stud on the rocks where his little canno was hid, they thought he was only watchin' the say. Darby sighed whin he looked at it. and thin at the great four-man cannos on the baches.

Thin he turned around and wint back to find the company round the long tables, but nothing at all on thim but his two bottles. At the head ov the table was the ould Earl, smilin' wicked like, for the wicked ould wits in him suspected Darby, an' he mint to kill him crool. And beside him Fiona, the bride, all in silvery white, and at the other side Dermod, all in splindid armour with gould and jools on him. Fiona wore the say gerril's pearls about her neck. And as Darby passed in he saw soldiers houldin' a great nit, and knew 'twas to catch him with.

The eyes of Dermod and Breffni was sparkling with

the greed; they could nivir have enough riches, and they

waited for the magic.

"The bottle is twice bigger than the other," says Dermod, says he. "There musht be gran things within."

"I do not like ye'r fairies," says the Earl, says he. "And whin ye have the wurd learnt, Dermod and Breffni, ye will take this great man that has shamed us, an' I will listhen to him dyin'," says he.

And Fiona groaned.

Thin came Darby up the room, sthraight and tall as a young tree, over the clane rushes on the floor, and lookin' round at the fine hangin's on the sthone walls.

And all behind the guests stud armed min, for no one

trusted another in those days.

"Now, man ov the Joyces," says Dermod, signing to the min to lay the wine-cups. "Now. Or if ye have fooled us," says he, and touched his waypons.

"Are ye all ready?" says Darby. "And ye will give me own bottle back, Dermod O'Shannassey? That is a promise." He came up close to the head ov the table an' drew a long breath, for maybe the fairies might fail him, and death might be near. Thin, "Bottle, do ye'r duty!" he shouts out.

With that—no gould, no diminds, but ye could not see the place for whirling sthicks. The company wint roaring round the room, Dermod and Breffni rose howlin', and the ould Earl roared, an' the soldiers cursed,

and such murther nivir was.

The two O Shannasseys med at Darby to kill him, but they were bate away, and hurled around the table,

an' Darby cot Fiona's hands.

"Oh, go!" says she. "Go, Darby! For they know ye, an' they will kill ye crool. Go and leave me now," says she, "and I will die in the say alone."

"Arrah, nivir!" says Darby, says he. "No one will

notice ye now. Run to the canno."

So Fiona ran, but as she wint she sthopped by her

uncle the Archbishop who had her gould, and axed it ov him.

"Oh, take it," says he, being moirthered with batin'.

"Take it, and let me be."

An' he gave the bag into her hand, and thin the tairies bate him no more. So he knelt an' prayed an' rubbed his bruises.

And as Darby turned he saw the ould Earl give a lep, and the wicked face ov him twisthed and he fell back dead.

"Oh, sthop it; we know ye now!" roars Dermod. "Sthop this magic, or we'll kill ye! Me father is dead." And if ye do," says Darby, "ye'll be bate for all

"And if ye do," says Darby, "ye'll be bate for all time. But if I do sthop it," says he, high above the bawlin', "will ye let me go," says he, "with me bottles, an' give me a sthart in me boat to get away?"

Black Dermod laffed, knowing the min he had to folly

Darby

"Yes," says he, "but sthop it. I give ye me word,"

says he.

So Darby got to the door. And, "Into ye'r bottle!" says he, and then he med way through the soldiers, just touchin' thim that thried to sthop him, for already the O'Shannasseys was shoutin' for his blood. He ran hard to the bache, and half-way there he overtook Fiona, and he cot her up and lepped to the boat and shoved off till the canno cut through the wather. And agin waves rose bating the bache, while Darby flew through the calm wather with a current dhrawing him on.

Whin they were gone three mile there was no sign of cannos on the say, an' he left the oars and tuk Fiona and

kissed her.

"Me wife," says he. "Me wife soon to be. Even

in a little cottage," says he.

"Not so," says she, verra proud, "but in me own castle," says she. "And see, I have all the gould and the pearls here. So to the castle, Darby," says she. "Pull hard, for they will folly."

He pulled, with the ocean light dreeping from the oars,

and once he thought he saw a pale face look from the say, an' thin 'twas but a moonbame glancin' on the wathers. The first bottle brought thim bread and milk to ate, so they were not hungry whin they reached the sands and med up to the castle. A sour ould man answered thim.

"I am Fiona Geraldine," says Fiona, "come to me own. Git min," says she, "and a priest," says she, "to marry me to this fine gintleman," and she wint in

proud and splindid.

The ould man grumbled till Darby gave him a taste of a shake, and thin he prayed on his knees. So Fiona and Darby was married, in the light of the mornin'; but they were scarce man an' wife, whin they heard the chinkin' ov bits and thrample of horses, and there were the two O'Shannasseys and five hunthred min, grim around the castle wall. Darby sphoke to thim from the windy.

"Come down," says Dermod, says he, "ye vilyin, and we will kill ye. But the Lady Fiona," says he, "we will take back gintle and quiet, only she shall wait

to see ye hang-be ye'r heels, Darby O'Toole."

Thin came Fiona to the walls, all in her bridal gownd an' the gould on her head.

"An' kill me," she says, "for I will die, but nivir be wife to ye, Dermod Dhoe."

"We will see to that," says he. "Ye that is helped be magic. We will see to that," says he. And thin he cried out, for Darby came beside her, an'he had washed the brown from his hair, and they saw it was ripe red, and knew who he was.

"Take the castle!" cries Breffni. "Bate down the

gate! That's the vilyin ov long ago."

They came tearing at the walls, a cloud of fierst faces, with the shine of cowld stheel, and settin' the great rams

to break in the door that was crazy with age.

And Darby looked down sorrowful and hopeless. Help he had none. Alone he might have lepped out at the back and gone away, but with Fiona he cud not.

"Darby," says she, "ye are verra sthrong," says she. "Will ye hit me onst with the sthaff in ye'r hand, that I may not be tuk be Dermod O'Shannassey, or see ye die shlow?"

He held the little hands ov her, an' he promised, and so they sthud together lookin' out across the wild stretch ov the goulden sands, with the say crooning up over it, and the humps of the white sandhills, an' the hills risin' high behind, and the little brown sthreams runnin' down among the rocks.

Bather and crash below, and thin a great shout, for there was O'Shannassey's own ould man that they'd forgotten pulling hard to let down the dhrawbridge.

'It is the ind," says Darby, says he, "but before it

comes for me that man must die."

"It is not quite the ind yet," says a voice, and, wheeling, Darby saw the little man he had sould the cows to.

"I came in be the back way to wish ye joy," says he. "An' I think I have a few friends of mine here that might help," says he.

With that he whispers to the bottle they had forgotten, and as the bridge lifted, out poured a sight ov quare bint

little min, with clubs in their hands.

And the ould felly that opened the gate he was punished, for he was bate by thim inside for being so treacherous and sthabbed be thim outside for a thraitor; so he will not throuble the sthory agin. So before ye could clap ye'r eyelids every O'Shannassey soldier was off his horse, bound and helpless, and the two O'Shannasseys thimselves, with their hands tied behind thim, were walked up to Darby and Fiona.

"And who will hang from the castle walls now," says

Darby, "ye two vilyins?"

"Ye that are in league with the fairies," cries Breffni. "Twas no mortal min we fought below."

There was tears in his eyes from the rage.

The little bint min they sthud quiet an' silent waiting for orthers, ropes in their hands. And Fiona's eyes were sunshine in her head, and she cried for joy as she had not tor fear.

"Breffni and Dermod O'Shannassey," says Darby, says he, eyein' thim, "I was married to-day, an "—he looked at the rope—"an' I will not sthain me weddin' day with blood," says he. "So go back to ye'r own place," says he, "and lave me wife hers. But if ye do not rule bether there, or if ye burrn a poor man's house, or rob or murther, I have frinds," says he, "that will tell me all, an' I will soon be with ye, Earl ov O'Shannassey. An' ye will lave me fifty min," says he, "to sarve me. And sind me a hundthred head of cattle and ov sheep, an' lave me fifty horses, and ye can go. To-morry ye cannot," says Darby.

So Breffni, being wise, wud not listhen to Black Dermod's ravin's, but saved his life, and rode away to bury his father. And whin he got back more punishmint fell on him, for all the sthrange chiefs and lords, sore with batin', had tuk his castle for the insult he had put on thim, an' it tuk near all his money to buy thim out. But he sint the cattle an' sheep to Darby, an' maybe he was a bether man in his poverty, for he nivir

throubled thim agin.

But Black Dermod, they say, was losht in the say, and some says he was tuk away be the say king's dather for the harrum he would have done to Darby O'Toole.

Thin down at Fiona's castle there was feasting for seven days, and Honora came quick back to him, the sweet eyes of her clear with joy, an' thin Darby gave the bottles back to the little man, for they wud not have magic in the house.

And whin the little man was goin' he bid Darby look down to the barn, and there was Acushla and Mavourneen, fat and sleek, grazin' away, quiet and aisy.

"There is luck in a brave heart, an' maybe bether

luck in a kind one," says the little man, an' wint.

There was soon a sight ov cottages about the land, and corn and hay, an' cows an' sheep an' horses, an' Darby an' his wife nivir forgot the poor. He lived on there with

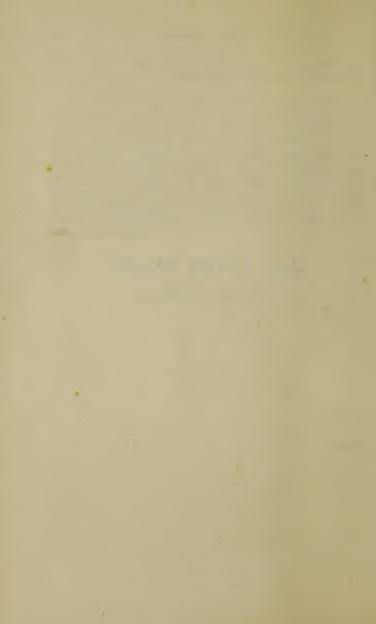
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Fiona his wife, and Honora his mother, the happiest man in all Ireland. The land gave to him and the say gave

to him in plinty.

So there he lived an' his childthren afther him for many years; and if ye go to the great wide sands now sthretching away lonesome and splindid, goulden and grey, and if ye look inland ye can see the roons ov the castle, an' the square marks of little houses, and thin ye can walk pasht the sandhills, where the shamerogues make a net of yelly and green, and on to where the heather is pink an' purple an' mauve, and the brown sthreams croon pasht the ferrns in the rocks, and ye can think of Darby O'Toole and his wife, who lived there happy and contint.

# MR. JONES HELPS MOSENTHALS



### MR. JONES HELPS MOSENTHALS

ITTLE Mr. Jones, head clerk in the firm of Mosenthals & Co., stopped to look lovingly in the firm's window. Mosenthals did not go in for show. A priceless pink pearl was flung carelessly on to a fold of purple velvet. A few unset diamonds blended on a bed of satin. A string of emeralds hung over a stand, and a few finished pieces of work were dotted about just to show what the sellers could do.

Mr. Jones knew the wealth which lurked in the small shop, and the treasures which were hidden upstairs.

"Robbers!" he murmured. "If there were no robbers." He grew pale, recalling his adventures in Paris when he had shot and killed apaches, and saved his firm thousands.

Someone bumped into him rudely, and Mr. Jones dropped a precious package of sweet-peas which he was bringing home to Anna, his wife. He had been

out on a message for Mr. Amos Mosenthals.

"They're gone! The bump," he wailed, going down on his knees. "Gone." The sallow gentleman who had bumped into him had just alighted from an electric brougham, driven by a black chauffeur, and looked in amazement at the little man.

"What are gone?" he said. "Sorry."

"Gone," said little Jones, groping in the mud.

It is easy to attract a crowd in Bond Street, even in the morning. Several people stopped, and a policeman walked towards Mosenthals.

"And Mr. Amos expected me. I am late, and now they're gone."

The sallow man looked anxious.

"Belong to Mosenthals?" he said nasally, his mind immediately turning to jewels.

Mr. Jones snapped, "Of course," and groped, finding

odd sweet-peas.

" Pass along," said the policeman.

Mr. Samuel P. Rockfeller, the aggressor, here explained that he had bumped into one of Mosenthals' men, and the idiot had dropped some jewels.

"Clear away the crowd, officer."

"Carrying them loose?" snarled Mr. Rockfeller.

"No, in a paper bag," returned Mr. Jones, from the gutter.

Mr. Rockfeller ejaculated, "Gee!" heavily.
"I've got six," said little Jones, "seven, eight. wonder how many there were.'

"What 'ave you dropped?" said the policeman, who

knew little Archibald Jones.

"Sweet-peas," said Mr. Jones. "Gladys Unwin." Mr. Rockfeller swung on his heel, and darted into the private entrance, cursing all fools as he went. Little Jones, getting up, thought he saw a one-eyed man in the crowd, and his heart missed a beat; he distrusted all one-eyed men horribly since his adventure in Paris. Then he dusted his clothes, and looked at the electric car; he was doubtful as to the owner's position.

"Where is he—Dr. Faustus?" he said absently.

Dr. Faustus is the name of a black pansy, and Mr. Jones blushed at his slip.

The darkie suggested blandly that Mr. Jones should

go home and enquire.

"Home to Bedlam," said 'Dr. Faustus 'crisply.

"None o' your lip, Black Pearl," said Mr. Jones haughtily, going in the private entrance.

He went to his desk. Mr. Rockfeller was with the

partners.

The speaking-tube bell rang, and a clerk looked up. "Wanted in the Holies," he said, "Mr. Jones."

Little Mr. Jones dusted his knees again and went in.

Mr. Amos Mosenthal was drawing devils on the blotter, a sure sign of worry. Mr. Samuel P. Rockfeller was speaking. They were heavy-featured dark men, with quiet faces.

"I've met him before," he snapped, "hunting for sweet-peas in Bond Street. Your head clerk,

Mosenthal?"

His contempt was quite immense as he queried.

"Mr. Jones has a great mind," said Mr. Samuel drily, "or so my brother thinks. Do these up, Jones."
Mr. Samuel saw the millionaire out. Mr. Jones

parcelled up the jewels deftly.

"Jones," snapped Mr. Amos, "Jones, we're in a difficulty." Mr. Jones meekly was sorry to hear it. Mr. Amos Mosenthal sighed. The firm was burdened with the charge of a very pretty niece, Gladys Hartley. Miss Hartley had an eligible suitor, rich and blameles. who had once been on someone's staff in France, and she inclined towards an impecunious major, minus half a foot, and plus several decorations. Miss Hartley's dowry was a matter for her rich uncles, but they wished her to marry money, not from meanness—the Mosenthals were generous men—but from the force of custom, which drove them to secure the best bargain at all times. Mr. Amos drew devils on his blotter, and wondered if the little man could help. Mr. Jones was a married man.

Mr. Jones' last effort at help had consisted in catching a blameless detective in mistake for a spy, when he had been sent to look after a dubious customer on the East Coast. The fate of the spectacled little man tracking the spy-hunter, who, in his turn, had taken Mr. Jones

for a German, has been written down.

Still sketching, Mr. Amos shot out his tale, reserving the names.

Mr. Jones put two fine emeralds together, deciding that

the largest was faulty.

"Miss Gladys and Colonel Hume," he said humbly, and Major Greer, Mr. Amos." Then he put down the emeralds and took out his sweet-peas.

"As a gardener, Mr. Amos," he said, "wot's tended dies, and weeds grows. I've noticed in the glass-'ouse house—that frequent. Why not try tending, Mr. Amos? Just push the Colonel and try a little jealousy as to Major Greer, or the jealousy with Colonel Hume. Wot a young lady sees always, they don't always want."

"Napoleon," murmured Mr. Amos softly, and his brother paused. Then they discussed the subject of a gentleman who wrote from Beachville-on-Sea to say he wanted a diamond necklace, and asking, as he was an invalid, if some could be sent down for him to

see. He enclosed a large cheque as a cover.

"Scott Fellowes," said Mr. Samuel. "We sent a few things to him. Has some old place there. Somehow don't like his letter. Jones wants a change; he's peaky. Let him go and enquire, see if the chap's genuine or not.

"You wish me to bring all my tact and knowledge to bear in the matter?" said little Mr. Jones.

"Having no one else to go, yes," said Mr. Samuel Mosenthal tersely. "Smell about. The man wants big

things from us."

Mr. Jones sighed as he realised that he was again to be entrusted with a difficult mission. He got Anna, his wife, to pack his bag. He ordered her to open and shut the little greenhouse in accordance with the sun's movements, and directed her to water freely.

Anna Jones accepted the directions with reserve, though she was too fond of her meek little spouse to

allow his plants to die.

Then Mr. Jones, armed with Tit-Bits and Pearson's Weekly, took train from Liverpool Street, and plunged into a competition. He was not weighed down by

carrying jewels as on a former occasion.

It was early summer, the hedges mostly green; the thorn, like snow, sparkled in the meadows. The air grew chill as the line neared the coast. Beachville-on-Sea sparkled in sunlight, with a cold wind making the golden sands dance. Mr. Jones was driven to a pretentious hotel with draughty wooden verandahs, and low-ceiled rooms with French windows. There was no fire in the empty coffee-room. He shivered as he drank his tea, and decided to keep on his great coat.

"With all the pneumonia about," murmured Mr. Jones, wondering if they would let him go into the

kitchen to get warm.

The sea was blue, its little waves coldly fringed with white. The wind blew fiercely, rustling through the

dry grass on the sandhills.

Mr. Jones went to the office, where he questioned the lady in charge with such marked deftness that she rushed off to tell the landlord.

"'Tec," she whispered. "Nothing he didn't ask, I tell you. Who lived here and there; said he was down on pleasure, not on business; and more questions."

The landlord told the head waiter, who confided it to

the Boots.

"A 'tec from London. What's up?"

Mr. Jones peeped on to the terrace, and saw a very pretty girl sitting alone there. Her eyelids were suspiciously pink and her mouth drooped sadly.

He went back to the office.

"Miss Hanly, the manager's niece," said the lady

in charge civilly.

Mr. Jones saw the landlord go out and heard stormy words, which he could not distinguish, then the sound of sobs.

"Something very distressing on the tapis," said Mr.

Jones.

The owner of the hotel was a low, mean-looking man with a saturnine face. He evidently bullied his niece.

"Remember you have no money," Mr. Jones heard

him say.

Mr. Jones, who was watched out of the hotel, found the way to the village, rejoicing in a road with high hedges which trapped the sunshine, and shut out a view of the cold sea. He went into the general shop and bought some sweets and cigarettes, and stayed to gossip He gossiped and questioned so importantly that the shopman grew curious. When the Boots from the inn came down and whispered a communication, Mr. Black said, "I thought as much," and answered Mr. Jones' further questions with intense respect, saying, "Sir" quite frequently.

"It is wonderful," thought Mr. Jones, "how capa-

bility commands respect."

"Mr. Scott Fellowes? Yes, sir. Paralysed gent, expecting a cure. Been 'ere since nineteen-hundred-and-seventeen; lives quiet at the Rose Bower. Pays? Well, pays very regular; orders not so great now since peace times."

Black, the shopman, then proceeded to say, jocularly, that the best of a local grocer was his power to give

information.

"To do so, and have nothing to conceal, are great

matters," said Mr. Jones absently.

At this, Black flushed, and hurriedly asked if he could oblige with sultanas or extra sugar—if the gentleman was married—also candied peel.

Mr. Jones accepted graciously; he knew how Anna

desired these things.

"Miss Hanly is a-goin' to marry him," confided Black.

"Marry a cripple!" said Jones.

"Well, they do talk of a cure, and they're goin' away. Powerful lot of money he must have to get her. Her uncle's working it."

"Horrible," said little Jones. "Poor child."

"An' 'ere," said Black, "is Scott Fellowes 'imself."

A lean man with a bleached sallow face, and piercing
eyes drove a seedy pony to the door. Black went out
to take the order.

The Boots, coming up, passed by the phaeton to whisper to Mr. Scott Fellowes, who immediately tried to look into the shop, past the array of soaps and patent foodstuffs in the window; but Mr. Jones kept back. He could look into the sunlight—the shop was dim.

The invalid said, "No, not going up to-day," to the

Boots, fidgeted as if he wanted to get past the packed

window, and drove away.

Then Mr. Jones asked his way and walked on. The sea was blue, its little waves coldly fringed with white. The wind blew fiercely, rustling through the dry grass on the sandhills.

The sheltering hedges broke off suddenly, and the little Londoner shivered as he faced the keen, cool

wind.

"Death to early seeds," he said, hurrying on. He went in the wrong gate to find himself in a garden blazing with spring flowers: anemones, forget-me-nots, double daisies, narcissi; and he stood in ecstasy. If the man loved flowers he could not be so bad.

A gardener shuffled into view, and Mr. Jones found that he was in Fir Grove, not in Rose Bower; but, melted by his visitor's ecstasies, the man offered to point out

a short cut.

Little Jones climbed over a stile, and made his way through a stunted shrubbery, until he saw a gloomy house surrounded by overgrown laurels, and the only rose, a thing of innumerable weak shoots, beckoning from the walls.

The pony-trap was being taken away from the door, and the owner had been transferred to a wheeled chair,

which he worked with powerful, slim hands.

"There," said Mr. Jones, "there," and shuddered. He was almost inclined to think that the man taking the pony had a shade over his eye.

"There," he said and dodged back. He had made no plan. How was he to approach this Mr. Scott

Fellowes?

He moved about undecidedly, and the man leading the pony saw him, and ran to his master.

"Someone lurking in the bushes, sir," he whispered.

Mr. Scott Fellowes grew white.

"Some whisper that he's a mystery from the hotel, sir."

Mr. Fellowes grew paler.

Mr. Jones came out with dignified carriage. The words "Life Insurance" had flashed to his brain.

Reserved and undecided, he crossed to the wheeled chair. His endeavour was doubled by the thought that in a day or two he would have to say that he was Mosenthals' agent, but the natural suspicion of Jewel Firms must account for the camouflage.

Mr. Fellowes propelled the chair up a flagged passage, and into a dim room with a huge acetylene gas-lamp

hanging over a square table.

"Now you, sir," said Mr. Scott Fellowes slowly.

Mr. Scott Fellowes was a sallow man with false teeth and dark eyeglasses. He moved once or twice in his chair quite easily.

"Calling round," said Mr. Jones, "as Life Insurance agent, hearing of this remote village. Curiously-

Mr. Scott Fellowes' sinuous hands gripped his chair. "I should scarcely have thought that I was a likely

subject," he said drily.

Mr. Jones blushed and murmured "Creaking gates." He also quoted, quite to himself, as he thought, "The strong shall be taken, and the weak left."

"So I came here—also hearing of your approaching

marriage—to hope to induce you—sir——"
"What company?" Scott Fellowes rasped out. " Hev?"

"The-the Mercantile Marine Insurance," stammered

Mr. Jones, upset by the "Hey!"

Mr. Fellowes very crisply said that he guessed the Marines were in it.

"Money any use to you?" he said slowly. "Good stuff, money. A few hundreds now for your-ercompany."

"Money," said Mr. Jones simply, "is always useful."
"They've sent you?" Fellowes leant forward and stared.

Mr. Jones believed himself discovered. He said "Yes—and apologising for the cammyflage," he added pleasantly.

"You look pretty seedy," said the invalid.

Mr. Jones said that he was feeling better. Overstrain from robber-catching had knocked him up for a time.

"A few hundreds," said Scott Fellowes, " on account,

as if, even--"

Mr. Jones murmured "Diamonds" half to himself. "Cash down would meet the case," he said; "that is the idea."

"I'll pay you cash down in three days," said the

sallow man.

"Which, of course, is the same," said Mr. Jones graciously. "If you keep the necklace from Mosenthals"—it will suit us both. Of course I must risk nothing."

Scott Fellowes rasped out that some people knew too

much. He stared bitterly.

"One's always caught on the last lap," he said. "Now you, Jones—it's a handy name—come back in three days, and I'll give you your price. I won't vamoose; no doubt you'll see to that. I want the shiners for the girl—for Beatrice."

Little Jones, sitting meekly, thought it all very curious. Why should this man talk of vamoosing—anglice, to run away—if he meant to pay the price

honestly for the necklace?

"Well, I'll wait," said Mr. Jones, "and if you—er—arrange with me, you shall have the diamonds, sir."

Mr. Scott Fellowes concentrated his bitter stare.

"I suppose looks conceal a lot," he said musingly. "Brains aren't worn outside. Hey, you little—" he bit off, "Mouse," just too late, "you shan't lose by it, anyhow."

Mr. Jones left the dark room, and went down the flagged passage. He was bewildered. Going to the post-office, he procured a large strong envelope, and returned to the hotel to write to Mr. Amos Mosenthal.

Just outside he could see the melancholy girl sitting

with her chin supported by her hands.

Little Jones told his employer that he would like to

see him. There was something wrong and he could not guess what it was. He also mentioned incidentally that there was a sad girl about to be practically given to this invalid, and that the whole place depressed him.

"He—Mr. S. F.—says he will have the price ready for me in three days, cash down, but I mistrust him," wrote Mr. Jones, in his neat hand. "I am quite prepared to carry the matter through alone, but should like your advice. The jewels are valuable. Might I suggest, sir, a dummy as first delivery? I wouldn't do it otherwise, Mr. Amos, reely!"

Archibald Jones took this letter to the post-office himself, mailing it by express delivery, thus confirming the idea that he was down on no ordinary business.

Mr. Amos Mosenthal answered it in person, driving his high-powered car. He listened to Mr. Jones' account of the affair. He went into the village street to see Mr. Scott Fellowes drive past, and his expression was one of reservation. Then he stepped on to the verandah to speak to Miss Beatrice Hanly.

She answered him absently. Mr. Amos said he would like to see the beach, and she got up without a word, leading the way to it. They were away for an hour.

leading the way to it. They were away for an hour.

"A very sensible girl," said Mr. Amos on his return.

"Without very great powers of conversation," suggested Mr. Jones diffidently. "I have endeavoured to talk to her."

"That's it; doesn't help one, saying 'Yes' and 'No,'" said Mr. Amos Mosenthal, drawing devils on the hotel blotter. He stayed the night, giving the name of Smith, the saturnine landlord staring at him; and he was off to London early the next morning, having gathered from the silent girl her late father's name and address.

Mr. Scott Fellowes did not come to the hotel, but Miss Hanly disappeared at tea-time with her uncle, and there were traces of tears on her lids when she returned.

On the third day Mr. Amos came down again, explaining that he had written from London to Scott Fellowes, saying the jewels would be sent on approval by a trusted

messenger, and Mr. Jones was to take them over. They

were real, not dummies.

Mr. Jones walked over. It was silent in the little place. The dark man showed him in, and the inner room was so dim after the glare outside, that little Jones blinked. Then he saw the paralysed man sitting in his chair.

"Come to appointment," said Mr. Jones nervously. He did not like it, the lonely house, this mystery man,

no one within call.

"I've got the money," said Mr. Scott Fellowes. "Take it an' I'm off. You're all the same, mice or rats, ready to be fed."

Mr. Jones objected to being likened to rodents, and

said so coldly.

"A hundred and fifty," said Mr. Fellowes. "How

d'y' get them?"

'Three thousand," said Mr. Jones, putting the case on the table. "Messrs. Mosenthals are allowing you to see if the necklace will suit, and I---"

Mr. Scott Fellowes appeared to bound in his chair. "Mr. Mosenthals! Are you," he shot out, "only—Mosenthals' man? Mosenthals! Mosen—Mose——"his

speech petered out.

Mr. Jones advised calm, through a silence which was fraught with electricity. He explained, as to a child, the precautions which jewel firms were obliged to take. How he had been sent down to make notes, as it were, to bring his experience and intelligence to bear on the matter, to see if it were desirable that Mr. Fellowes' request should be complied with. It had. On production of the money the necklace would be left. These were his instructions. Or if a cheque he must see it cashed.

"Mosenthals' clerk! Am I sane? I took you for a blasted 'tec,' groaned Mr. Scott Fellowes. "I was buying you. Here, I'm mad. Will you take your

notes, and go-you, Jones-amiably?"

Mr. Jones, feeling his spine creep, said, "Certainly not, sir."

The long white hands opened the case, and the peerless necklace flashed and winked in the thin light which came through the venetian blinds.

"Then have a drink while I get the cash," said Fellowes genially. "That's your commission. Have

a B. and S."

Mr. Jones murmured, "Stone ginger." Bottles stood on the table; the invalid wheeled himself towards it, and poured out some golden liquid. Mr. Jones took one sip and paused; the word "dope" sprang up before him. He laid the glass down; his head swam, his limbs were lead. Through a mist he saw the paralytic rise from his chair, and walk across the room, going swiftly and easily.

"I shall pretend to be worse than I am," thought

Mr. Jones, lolling supinely, his mouth slack.

"Wretched mouse! Rat too good for you," said Scott Fellowes. "And Sam Slavy took you for a 'tec—and a venial one. The girl's dollars must go now. No time

to get hers for myself."

The mist clearing, Mr. Jones saw the sallow man taking little parcels from drawers, and stowing them about him. Last of all, he picked up the necklace, and without haste commenced to prise the stones from their delicate setting.

Now Mr. Jones had taken very little dope; this destruction touched a spring in his befogged brain. He drew in his small feet, he set his teeth, and blinked at

a heavy candlestick on the table.

Scott Fellowes was absorbed in his work. He heard no movement, did not see the drugged little man rise

unsteadily.

"For England, Home, and Beauty," said Mr. Jones in drunken accents, as he struck with his brass weapon.

The strength of the blow would not have injured anybody, but the candlestick was heavy and came down on the base of Mr. Fellowes' skull, so that he toppled down stunned.

Mr. Jones, still dazed, picked up the necklace—it was greatly injured—swept up any loose stones and his notes, and staggered to the door. He came out into the brilliant sunshine, to see a motor in the avenue. The driver stared suspiciously at Mr. Jones.

"Master ready?" he queried.

"You will find him in there; he is dead," said Mr. Jones mildly. "I regret it, but I have again killed a man."

"You're a desperado, Jones," said Mr. Amos Mosenthal, from the other side of the fence where he was wait-

ing with three plain-clothes men.

"You see, he would have completely disembowelled the necklace if I had not struck," said Mr. Jones. "I feel exceedingly ill. He took me for a detective. Oh dear, oh dear!"

One of the plain-clothes men saw a tap, and put cold water on Mr. Jones' head. He then felt well enough to

remonstrate.

They hurried to the house to find Mr. Scott Fellowes just sitting up with murder in his eyes. His dash to the window was so swift that he was secured with difficulty, fighting hard.

"That blighted little mouse!" he said. "But for him, with his insurance agency and his marines . . . Took

him for a new 'tec."

One man coughed softly before he laughed to himself. "Mosenthals," said Mr. Jones gently, "would not send a man without resource on an errand like this. They trusted to ME." Here he drew himself up.

"To be done by a mouse!" groaned Mr. Fellowes.

"If it was even a decent rat!"

Mr. Archibald Jones said "tut," pettishly.

"Our Mr. Jones," murmured Mr. Amos Mosenthal, "invariably does the right thing—generally by—er—mistake. Know this man, Stewart? Hello! Why, what's up?"

For the plain-clothes man addressed was slashing and ripping at the wheeled chair, the padded cushions

yielding padding and then papers, mystic looking little

scraps covered with fine writing.

"We'd suspected someone," said the man Stewart. "but could find out nothing. There's a deep creek up here, and this fellow was often rowed out in a boat. When he'd done getting paid by Germany, he went back to his old lay-jewel robbery. They'll make it life, for sure, Sam Scott, this time."
"And this girl," said Amos Mosenthal, "this girl,

Scott?"

"Going to get hold of her money, halve it with the uncle," said Scott bitterly. "Wanted capital. I was sharing it with her uncle. Oh, I'd have kept the invalid

tack, an' let her go. I'm no Don Juan."

Mr. Amos Mosenthal carried the girl off to London to stay with his niece. He had read her father's will, seeing that Beatrice got complete control of her money on her marriage, and guessed the rest. The contents of the will had been concealed from her, and she believed herself to be a pauper.

"And about this, sir," said Mr. Jones, putting out notes to the value of one hundred pounds.

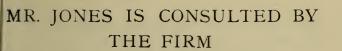
forgotten all about it."

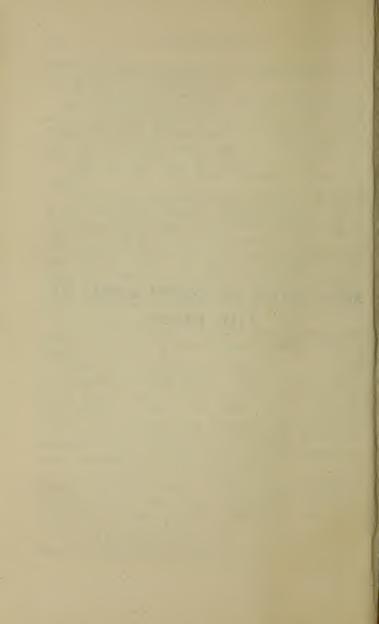
"Under the circumstances, I should keep it," said Mr. Samuel Mosenthal calmly. "Put up a new greenhouse, Jones. And we are obliged to you, Jones, for again saving the firm. At present we are worried, because we cannot get that Rockfeller order through. One stone cannot be found, nothing to match the others. Samuel P. spends his hours raving down the 'phone, because he must start for home next week.

"I am going up to see Gladys now," snapped Mr. Samuel, "to talk straight to her. Young Greer is hanging about there. True, she's protected by that strangely silent maiden you brought up. What on

earth you see in her, Amos-"

"I never have to find answers for her," said Mr. Amos, drawing a devil carrying a bow and arrow.





## MR. JONES IS CONSULTED BY THE FIRM

HE window-dresser of Mosenthals & Co had stepped outside to contemplate the sombre splendour of his work, and having decided it was perfect, grew irritable when Mr. Archibald Jones, one of the clerks, said it was meanish. "Too much white," said Mr. Jones. "Chuck in a

sapphire or two, Potts, or something coloured. It's

corpsy."

Mr. Potts replied pettishly that Mr. Jones' mind ran on carpet-bedding, and retired to move a necklace of milky pearls. He had just congratulated himself on the softness of his scheme: pearls, a few here and there, winking diamonds, and one marvellous fire opal, gleaming wickedly.

"Thinkin' of nasturtiums, you are," said Mr. Potts pettishly. Everyone at Mosenthals' knew that Mr. Jones was a gardener, rushing homewards to his sweetpeas and the greenhouse in which many things damped

off or were scorched up.

"I agree with Mr. Jones," said Miss Gladys Hartley softly. "I like colour, Mr. Potts. Get some sapphires

or emeralds."

Miss Hartley was, as Mr. Jones put it, "the firm's niece." The little clerk was devoted to her, for she sometimes asked him to tea to the big house at Lancaster Gate and showed him the flowers in the conservatory. He would spend an hour staring at the gorgeous blooms which were sent in by a nursery gardener, but he always said firmly that he liked to grow things himself.

"My carnations from the cuttings 'ave—having grown all weak-like," said Mr. Jones on the occasion of his last visit; "but I likes to watch them even fall, Miss

Gladys. It's creative."

So Mr. Jones was flattered when the firm's niece agreed with him. Gladys Hartley was accompanied by Beatrice Hanly, who proffered no comment, being a girl who seldom spoke, and in consequence a great friend of the silent member of the firm, Mr. Amos Mosenthal.

Mr. Jones asked politely what brought Miss Gladys out so early, and the young lady said business, but

blushed as she said it.

Mr. Jones went through the office door to his seat. Next moment the clerk by the speaking-tube announced that Mr. Amos wished to see Mr. Jones.

The little man put away a seed catalogue and hurried

to the firm's private room.

Mr. Amos Mosenthal, a large man, was there alone,

gloomily looking at a necklace of emeralds.

"Here we are again," he said. "Complete and gaudy, but neither of the pendants; and the letter—you don't read French, Jones?"

Mr. Jones replied that he disliked the language.

"—Says they won't be here for ten days. Rock-feller leaves to-morrow," said Mr. Amos wearily. "He'll raise Cain. Talks too much, that man does, Jones."

Mr. Amos drew a devil on his blotting-pad and relapsed into silence. Mr. Samuel Mosenthal, who was also big,

bustled in.

"Just seen Gladys off towards the Park," he said. "Amos, something must be done."

Mr. Amos drew a devil expressively.

"There's Hume, heir to baronetcy, sensible age, and Greer without a penny," he stormed. "Hey, Amos, say something."

Mr. Amos Mosenthal looked up, said, "Mons medal,

M.C., three wound stripes," and drew again.

"Hume is covered with decorations," said Mr. Samuel.

"Base-France," said Mr. Amos; "consult Jones, Samuel."

Feeling that he must speak to someone who would answer him, Mr. Samuel went into his grievances. His niece was trifling with a graceless, limping soldier who had done great things in France, when she might marry a staff officer who had never done anything. Mr. Samuel Mosenthal had not the least idea that Mr. Jones would proffer advice, but the little clerk was always anxious to help.

"My Anna, Mr. Samuel," he said, "relies on praise

as an antidote."

Mr. Samuel glared.

"Contra-trar-iety of human nature," said Mr. Jones, gulping at the word. "You praise Colonel Hume, belittle Major Greer. If Miss Gladys wasn't crossed, if the Major was praised to her, and, er—now if she saw him too popular with other ladies," said Mr. Jones, "would be my ideas, an' easily arranged with a friend or two, the Major lunching with others. See the idea?" said Mr. Jones pleasantly.

"Only thing I see is this damn necklace," said Mr. Amos suddenly, "and hear Rockfeller at the door."

Samuel P. Rockfeller in an expensive suit and a black pearl in his tie which Mr. Amos could have told him was not perfect, hurried in. Samuel Rockfeller never did anything slowly. He had ordered the emerald necklace a month before from Mosenthals, and was now calling to take it with him. The future Mrs. Rockfeller was to wear it on her wedding-day, as she preferred emeralds to diamonds.

"Sea pools," she had murmured to her adoring fiancé.

"If you can get them flawless."

When the millionaire realised that the necklace was not ready, he used language which made Mr. Jones blush.

Mr. Amos said nothing and Mr. Samuel could only suggest that the necklace should follow its owner to America. This being negatived, he then said the big stones could follow, and the pendants be fixed on out there.

"And get stolen," snarled Rockfeller. "You've told me yourself every stone is watched. Letters got at." He picked up the letter from Paris; it set forth the complete perfections of the two stones. "You must send a man over, then."

"He'll be followed by apâches," put in Mr. Jones nervously. "Killing them is so unnerving. Ahem!"

The cough was the result of the withering look which the American flung at the little clerk.

"Glance came with the impetus of a neighbour's snail

over the wall," murmured Mr. Jones to himself.

"The war has shortened our men," said Mr. Samuel thoughtfully, "and-jewels such as this . . . I don't know how the blamed thieves find out. They'll get into the cabin, dope the fellow. There's a gang now which must be spiritualists. But we'll do it."

"Send someone capable," snapped Rockfeller. meet the ship and square the customs—that is, arrange for my stones. And see it's in time for my wedding, you two, or there'll be some row. I'll pay a deposit now."

He wrote a cheque carefully, signed it neatly, and after a few more directions flung out in evident bad humour, taking the unfinished necklace with him. Mr. Jones from the window watched him get into his huge car.

There are at least three men who might be spies out there," he said; "a person in tweeds, a man whogracious heavens, Mr. Amos-whose second eve I cannot see."

Mr. Amos drew a devil as he asked how Mr. Jones

looking down saw any eyes at all.

"And a suspicious-looking female," concluded little Jones; "they are all watching Rockfeller, Mr. Samuel."

"The information, I fancy, is again leaking from inside," said Mr. Samuel gloomily. "Employés know too much and are paid too little to be faithful.

"Not all Napoleons," grunted Mr. Amos, a serious

note bordering on affection in his voice.

"And as to this other business," said Mr. Samuel,

"Jones suggests no opposition—too much of young Greer, he said. D'ye know, it might be sound.

"Miss Gladys is going to America, is she not," said Mr. Jones, "in September?—and I believe Colonel Hume is also invited. I should arrange for Major Greer to go also. If there was on board a man of tact, a clever man—if, for instance, I was on board—I should see that Miss Gladys observed Major Greer's frothy popularity. Any young actress crossing would, if approached, be friendly with the officer. Opposition, "said Mr. Jones, "is like weeding groundsel: the more you pull it up the more it seeds and grows, while waste corners are free."

Mr. Amos leant forward. "Jones, we'll send you with the emeralds," he said. "First-class with Gladys. You shall work it. Think out a way of hiding the things because you'll look so important that everyone will know you've got something to look after. And we'll

send your wife too-a trip for her."

Exhausted by so much speech, Mr. Amos put on his

hat and looked gloomy.

"America!" gasped Mr. Jones. "Oh, poor Anna, it's 'er dream-her dream-only last night. Send Anna!" said Mr. Jones. "Oh, Mr. Amos!" The little man danced. "N'York-I understand, Mr. Samuel, one pronounces it so—and the cream sodas and canvasbagged ducks-backed, Mr. Samuel, thank you. For the stones," said Mr. Jones, bowing, "you can rely on me as on former occasions."

Mr. Samuel said, "Right-go." When little Jones had gone out he flew at his brother, battering against complete silence as he declared that the little fool was sure to do something idiotic, and that he'd give away things to Gladys, and that he was sick of his brother's

fancies for incompetent asses.

"Bowed himself out like a leading actor," snorted Mr. Samuel. "Rely on him! He'll wear the things as tiepins or something like that, or put them in a chocolatecream and stare all day at the box. Thirty thousand pounds' worth." Mr. Amos rose and looked at his watch. "Taking the girls to lunch," he said, strolling out. "Keep working, Sam—soothe you. You started Jones, remember."

Mr. Amos Mosenthal passed through the office, noting that little Mr. Jones was working feverishly with a rapt expression on his face. He looked carefully to see if any of the other clerks were watching the little man, but they seemed intent on their work. He went into the discreet shop full of glittering treasures, and stood frowning. Great jewellers have a hundred clean crooks to contend with. One of these was either himself in Mosenthals' employment at the moment, or extracting information from some body in it. They had been free for a time, now things were leaking out—and clever robberies taking place.

Mr. Jones worked feverishly until lunch time, when he rushed to the telephone to speak to Anna his wife, chafing with impatience when answered by Vi'let the

" girl.

"Missus out? Vi'let—you can't hear? You never listen; the wire's all right; heard you say 'Blow'im,' Vi'let. Tell the Missus we're going to A-mer-i-ca. Got it, Vilet? A-mer-i-ca."

Here Vi'let remarked aside, "At 'is hage!" called,

"Grocer's 'ere," into the receiver and rang off.

Mr. Jones had been asked to tea by the firm's niece, so he could not hurry home. He made his way by tube to Lancaster Gate to find Peter Greer, a pleasant-looking youth with a limp, in the drawing-room. Major Greer's manner was so full of charm that little Mr. Jones felt like a traitor, but the firm came first, and Miss Gladys was the firm's niece. Gladys took him to see the flowers and the built-out conservatory, fastening a carnation in the little man's coat. She heard with a smile that, the firm considering an escort advisable, Mr. Jones was to go on the ship to America; and when they returned to the drawing-room Hume was announced. He was an important man of uncertain years, with pince-nez planted clipping his blunt nose.

door, and sighed impatiently.

"None of Major Greer's popular ways," murmured Mr. Jones. "All the ladies like Major Greer. Saw him yesterday at door of the Ritz fêted by 'em."

Gladys Hartley said "Oh," a little irritably.

"Takin' in someone all in white, as far as it went, ahem!" said Mr. Jones. "Costume curtailed at either

end, Miss Gladys; somewhat stagey."

Now this was true, and Mr. Jones looked on it as a stroke of sheer genius to have recalled the incident. Peter Greer, having begged Gladys to lunch with him, had met a friend and joined his party, which consisted of two musical comedy stars.

Miss Hartley sighed, and shook hands with Colonel Hume. She poured out tea listlessly. When America was mentioned, Greer sulked, and Mr. Jones asked him

why he did not go too, to see the country.

"Being accustomed to voyages no doubt I could assist you, Major," he said modestly, "an' should be pleased to do so."

Greer grinned, but looked thoughtful.

Mr. Jones hurried to the Tube and was rushed to Notting Hill Gate. His fevered rush to the lift drew some pungent comment upon him and he hurried to his home on winged feet.

"The benefit of physical training never passes," puffed

Mr. Jones.

Anna Jones was at the gate, her kind face puckered. "Archibald, if it's more danger," she said, "at your age ... A 'merry go '—what merry go are you going on?"

"N'York city—ice creams an' green-back ducks," gasped Mr. Jones. "The arber, Anna; I am exhausted."

Five minutes later Mrs. Jones was clasping her head to hold it on. A trip to America! Her life's dream—she and Jones.

"And rubbers I shall ask for at Gooches," said Mrs. Jones, "and, Archibald, I shall take a bowl and bring

home ices for supper; one must acclimatise oneself a little to the food."

Life passed quickly for Mr. Jones. The arrival of the emeralds was delayed, and the little man purchased flannels and straw hats, directing Anna to be sure to crease everything or even put a little dust on, as he understood new clothing was dutiable. Mrs. Jones surprised him with strange dishes and a variety of canned food—she no longer used the word "tinned"—which gave him indigestion.

The firm sent for him frequently. It was three weeks later when Mr. Samuel told him that Major Greer had booked a passage on the *Glorytania* and that they had encouraged him, also that the young man was getting drawn into a theatrical set; and Mr. Jones felt like a

Judas.

August, sultry and exhausted, sulked thunderously towards September, and the firm of Mosenthals was apprised that a determined attempt had been made to rob the messenger carrying the great emeralds from France. He had been obliged, in fact, to return to Paris to recuperate. The jewels had been packed into a small despatch case chained to him, but at Calais two men dressed as officials had entered the carriage and declared they were in search of one Lebois, a jewel thief, carrying an historical emerald. Goulet, amazed, had presence of mind to shout for help, and in a struggle, with a variety of strangers endeavouring to rescue him, so as to hand him over to the police, he succeeded in keeping his bag. He was badly mauled, but not robbed.

"But it shows you," said Mr. Samuel, "that there is

a traitor."

"In a despatch box!" sniffed Mr. Jones; "so obvious."
"Which reminds me," said Mr. Samuel, "that you start in a fortnight, Mr. Jones. Now for a plan."

They commenced to talk it over.

Breast pockets, hollow heels, boxes with sliding panels were discussed. Mr. Jones suggested a dinner-

#### MR. JONES IS CONSULTED BY THE FIRM 101

roll, but Mr. Samuel thought a stale dinner-roll would attract the attention of any searcher; and without coming to any conclusion Mr. Jones went home.

He found his wife trying on a new hat which she was stabbing with two enormous hatpins, made of some

lumps of stuff which looked like coloured wax.

Mr. Jones leaped. He rushed to the 'phone to tell Mr. Amos that he'd got it, and was offended when the senior partner hoped it was a mild attack.

"Him—impossible to tell you more, sir," said Mr.

Jones; "almost worth a Tube up, sir."

Mr. Amos said it might be, and Mr. Jones went to

Lancaster Gate to reveal his plan.

The great emeralds would be embodied in coloured wax, fastened by skilled workmen to a steel pin and chained to Anna's hat.

"Safe—safe as—peaches in muslin bags," gasped little Jones. "Who would think of Anna's hatpin? And Anna is quite trustworthy. Quite reliable."

When Mr. Samuel heard the plan he first swore freely, and then thought it over. If the thieves were on the watch they would watch Jones and not his wife.

Matters were then complicated by the fact that Mrs. Jones, quite declining to mix with the saloon, had taken a second-class ticket, and that Mr. Jones travelled first, so that the stones would not be under his care. Mr. Samuel said that it made it better, and as in any case they were sure to lose the sum they had paid for the emeralds and be shot by Rockfeller for disappointing him, it did not matter. He took a gloomy view of what he termed his brother's madness.

In some mysterious way Mr. Samuel encouraged Peter Greer to see America, and having studied the passenger list, he paid visits to a certain young actress, Miss Mavis de Vere, coming away with a grim smile on

his face.

Mr. Amos Mosenthal took walks with Miss Hanly, their conversation limited to remarks every ten minutes, and the emeralds arrived safely.

Four days before the Glorytania sailed, Mr. Amos was closeted with one of their best workmen, and when the day arrived he went to Liverpool himself, to entrust a long narrow box to Mr. Jones.
"Don't you fail us, Jones," he said; "the firm has had

some knocks lately. And the insurance is a matter of

difficulty now."

Little Archibald Jones drew himself up as he replied that failure or detection was impossible, and that he "Look through would look out for any apaches. them, Mr. Amos," said little Jones simply. the blackness of their steely blue minds."

Mr. Amos rubbed his head softly.

The huge liner was crowded. People were buzzing about, securing tables and places for their deck chairs, and an astute head steward was reaping the first part

of his harvest.

Gladys, looking bored, strolled on deck escorted by Colonel Hume, her eyes searching the gangway uneasily. At the last moment, Peter Greer, carrying an ornate despatch box with M. de V. blazoned on it in gold lettering, rushed on deck, and handed his burden to a very pretty girl wearing a great deal of hat and silk stocking, who thanked him sweetly.

"Any more for the shore?"

Mr. Amos Mosenthal walked off looking gloomy. Mr. Samuel followed, his expression a blend of sneer and smile, and Mr. Jones hurried to his wife's cabin.

She shared it with a girl of sixteen but her cabin mate

was on deck.

Had Mr. Jones known, his hurried movements were watched by two pairs of keen eyes, whose owners noted that he kept one hand over his pocket as he ran

along.

Anna Jones had objected strongly to taking charge of the valuable stones, but after a time she grew to feel rather proud of it, remarking that they were much safer with her. She accepted the charge, now removing a large bright blue hatpin with the steel safety-pin.

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"There's one error, Archibald," she said. "I should have had a pin for t'other one. See—it's just stuck in ordinary like."

"No one will look so close at your hat," said Mr.

Jones pettishly, "or steal a hatpin, Anna."

He returned to the first-class, to feel more like Judas than ever when Peter Greer sat beside him and talked

to him of his troubled life.

"Can't make out why those old buffers urged me to come out here," he said, "when they're so set against the match; but they did, and now it's Gladys who is shying off."

Here he was called by Miss de Vere, who wanted her

tea, and he had to take his with her.

Gladys Hartley, coming into the lounge, sat by Mr. Jones, who was drinking in the magnificence of his surroundings, and said she hated ships.

"All wiggle and squirm and low ceilings," she said

irritably. "Major Greer here?"

"Some young lady came to ask to take him to tea," said Mr. Jones. "He is so popular, Miss Gladys."

Miss Gladys, chin in air, asked Mr. Jones to fetch Colonel Hume, and they would all have tea together.

Mr. Jones' mind was at rest. He spent a large portion of his time with his Anna, who never took off her hat on deck, and his eyes strayed with pride to the bright blue lump of wax which was boon companion to a large glass bead.

He made friends. A charming little clergyman in the second-class found a kindred soul in Mr. Jones; they talked of sweet-peas and greenhouses, and Mr. Jones confided how his life's dream was to have a little house in Surrey and exhibit at shows when the firm could spare him.

"City firm?" asked Mr. Green. "Drapery? Travel-

ling, I suppose?"

Little Jones was on the alert for suspicious persons this question lulled him pleasantly. Any crook on his trail would know too well that he belonged to the great Mosenthals.

He said "Jewels" proudly.

"I have so many confidential errands now," he said; "see no hopes of retiring; but when they can replace me I trust to get away. Samuel has hinted at a pension."

Mr. Green was equally civil to Anna Jones; he was, in

fact, a charming companion.

He sympathised with Jones when the little clerk talked of nerve strain. He said it must be a relief to come on a regular pleasure trip, and looked astonished

when Mr. Jones grunted importantly.

The little man found another friend in the first-class, a Mr. Henderson, a sandy, freckled man neither old nor young, apparently rich and with a leaning towards socialism. Mr. Jones had suspected several other men who tried to be friendly, particularly a slender, snappy American who offered him cocktails.

"In my position one must not drink with strangers," said Mr. Jones, without thought, to his socialistic friend, Henderson. "I—er—ah—that is—I am in charge of

a young lady."

"Who is having a tremendous flirtation with a flight loot," said Henderson pleasantly. "Nice boy, stony broke; said he'd had so many crashes one more does not matter."

Mr. Jones said it would not do at all, and looked round for his firm's niece.

"From Scylla to Charybdis," he said unhappily.
"Dear dear!"

Henderson talked of the inequalities of riches.

Curiously, he brought up Mr. Rockfeller's name.

"Know a pal of his," he said, "and the fellow's fretting, fretting, mark you, Mr. Jones, because some

fretting, fretting, mark you, Mr. Jones, because some historical emeralds have not turned up for his wedding-present to his wife. Got lost or something. Haul for some thief, p'raps, to even up things a bit."

Mr. Jones looked in the direction of the second-class

deck; he smiled softly. Then he went below.

A jazz band was braying unmelodiously, and Gladys Hartley and a youth of tender years were capering the dance of the hour. Mr. Jones thought it all funny dancing. Some people stopped short and kicked up their feet behind, others rolled with exaggeration. He did not care for the shapeless dresses, and considered Anna's trim belted figure far superior to any of the fashionable ladies.

Gladys Hartley smiled, dismissed her Flight Lieutenant and sat beside Jones. Colonel Hume was tripping clumsily along with a stout girl in pink. A pair flashed down the room, dancing exquisitely, the girl in gold tissue, an absurd emerald satin tail floating behind, her forehead crossed by a band of diamonds.

"How well they dance," said Mr. Jones enviously;

"but the lady, I fear, is theatrical."

"She is quite a nice girl. I spoke to her yesterday." Gladys' voice shook a little. "She hopes to rise quite high in the profession. Oh!" The dancers came past and a pink ostrich-feather fan fell close to Gladys.

Peter stopped. Gladys Hartley handed the fan back to

Miss de Vere, smiling pleasantly.

"If you're tired—"she said. "It's hot; sit here, and

we'll have a lemon squash."

Mavis de Vere sat down and looked at Gladys for quite

a long time.

"Some people make you feel beasts," she said thoughtfully. "No, I won't dance again, Major Greer. I'm tired—I'll talk to Miss Hartley."

"Here's Colonel Hume," said Gladys. "I ought to

dance with him."

Here Miss de Vere murmured that Hume looked that solemn she'd like to take him jazzing, and as she noted his shocked expression as he saw who Gladys' companion was, Mavis whistled a little trill.

Mr. Jones, feeling that all was well, went to the smokingroom. He sat there for a little until he felt sleepy, and was going to bed when Henderson called him loudly.

"Hi-Jones-a minute here."

Henderson was supporting a youth who swayed, weakkneed, his mouth open, his expression idiotic.
"Give me a hand. It's young Carmichael. We'll

slip him to his state room quietly. Stupid oaf."
Mr. Carmichael lurched forward, called Mr. Jones "dear ol' bean," and fell on his neck. Here he lingered, and as the little clerk staggered he slipped downwards, clutching as he went, Henderson making ineffectual dives from the outer circle, the American whom Mr. Jones disliked springing forward to watch.

"Deah—old bean," said Carmichael, climbing to his feet—"ptomaine poisoning from bad cocktail. Aw—I'll go." They assisted him off to a small stateroom, Mr. Jones bowing as Henderson thanked him for

his strength and helpfulness.

As they came out, the American was outside the door

lighting a cigarette. He looked sharply at them.

"That's a crook," whispered Henderson, "Night, Jones, old bov."

"And my goodness, I've not been across to Anna," said Mr. Jones; "dreadful oversight."

"She'll forgive you," said Henderson.

"She, yes," said Mr. Jones. "But the firm—good-

night, Henderson."

He got back to his cabin and stared. He had left a box on its end, and it was now flat. A short examination showed him that his cabin had been searched

thoroughly.

Mr. Jones thought things over—if he made a row they would all know he was taking the emerald. No doubt it was a plot between this creature Carmichael and the American, Billing. Now that he came to think of it, Carmichael's hands had clung curiously to him.

Mr. Jones bolted his door and slept ill. Next morning he saw the captain, a burly gentleman who had given up trusting anyone, and who had heard the

story with reserve.

"All I entreat, sir, is that you give me a little protection leaving the ship," said Mr. Jones. "To allow me to wait, or to give me a couple of sailors. I believe

I am suspected."

"They have not got the stones?' snapped the captain. "Sending you—of course, one never knows from looks."

Mr. Jones rose. "I, sir, have killed a man," he

said coldly, "in pursuit of my business."

"I killed two hundred myself in pursuit o mine," said the captain absently. "Collision; one can't count that. Eh—well, I'll wireless to verify your story. Will I have these men watched? No, I won't. I sail a liner. I don't deal in jewels. Give me the stones and it's another affair."

Mr. Jones moved towards the door hurriedly.

"I regret, as I cannot verify your credentials, that that

is impossible," he said, going out.

"Well—I'm——" the Glorytania's captain exploded into helpless laughter while Mr. Jones strolled down the deck, where he met his friend Henderson, to whom in his excitement he confided.

"But why should they search your cabin?" Hender-

son asked.

"Because they are fools," said Mr. Jones, looking at the green sea and the white churn of the wash, "Er—because I might have jewels, as I travel for Mosenthals. I have not . . . of course."

Henderson coughed thoughtfully.

The little man went on to the second-class. He found Anna his wife watching a game of deck cricket. A sharp breeze was blowing and a gust caught her hat, lifting it a little. Mr. Jones turned pale and grabbed it wildly, ejaculating, "Take care, for God's sake."

"It's the blamed thing's brim," said Anna. "If I

might put on a sensible cap, Archibald-"

Green the clergyman came moistly from his fallen wicket.

"You weren't looking at the ball at all," shrilled his lady captain; "you were watching Mrs. Jones, Mr. Green."

Mr. Jones looked admiringly at his wife. She was, he considered, worth looking at. None of your floppy shape-

less women, but of fine presence, trimly corseted.

Next morning Mr. Jones grew nervous. The Glorytania had made a record voyage, she was ahead of time. The vast buildings of New York loomed out of a troubled sky, and they threaded their way through the thronged waterway. Mr. Jones' heart missed occasional beats as they throbbed majestically to their berth. The quay seemed to hum. He feared the ordeal of the customs, repudiating pettishly Anna's idea of assuming an American accent and saying "Yew can searrch me, sirree," to the head official.

He left his luggage to look after itself and stood by Anna at the side as they bore into the quay. Each moment he expected to see Rockfeller's face loom out

of the excited throng.

In his nervousness he stood sideways, his eyes on the flaring hatpin in his wife's hat. Someone near him sighed sharply and struggled backwards for a moment. The great gangways slid into place. Still no Rockfeller.

"Customs this way, all boxes ready and open." Mrs. Jones had engaged a man; they moved forward into the press. Next moment the unfortunate lady shrieked aloud in anguish as hands plucked at her pin and, owing to the steel chain, her hat came with it, the pins tearing free and taking hair also.

"I'm scalped," wailed Mrs. Jones. "Archibald-

I'm scalped."

"The emeralds! Thieves!" shrieked Mr. Jones. "Oh, you, captain!" He turned to shake his fist at Captain Graham and somehow was through the crowd in pursuit of the base Mr. Green, who was wearing a panama hat and an overcoat and pulling the pins from Anna's hat, which he threw down.

"Thief—thief!" The astounded crowd opened. Officials grabbed at nothing. Somehow little Mr. Jones got through to a comparatively open space and close to his prey. Leaping forward he grabbed but only reached

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the panama hat. They were among the taxis waiting cars.

"Hatless man! Stop thief! Stop Mr. Rockfeller's

jewels," shrieked little Jones, flying on.

He saw a taxi move. He leapt at a huge Overland

driven by a black chauffeur.

"Black Pearl, are you Rockfeller's?" gasped the little man, merely running on as the outraged darkie answered volubly.

"Taxi!" Mr. Jones pulled out a five-pound note. "Auto-taxi—after that hatless man, after him!"

Five pounds put in the hands of an engaged taxi, the driver shot on his clutch; but where in all wide New York was he to find the other car?

He followed two or three; darted here and there and

pulled up in Broadway.

"The devil a bit of use to be wandtheren like this,"

the driver said. "I have lost the trail."

Mr. Jones stood on the step. "A hatless man, driver," he said, "has stolen forty thousand pounds run away with it."

To this the Irish driver replied that thim ship thieves'd stheal a gold eye out of yer head, and suggested the

police.

"I seen him go," said the man. "I must get back,

annyways."

And then the great God Chance played a card. In the great throbbing city, alone, not even knowing a street, little Mr. Jones stood indeterminate. Police? He would be laughed at. To face Rockfeller with this fairy tale of hatpins . . . And standing alone and hopeless he saw Green come out of a store with a new hat on his head. Mr. Jones noticed that an overcoat covered the parson's uniform.

Mr. Jones dived across the street; the younger man saw him and ran, turning sharp; the little clerk following doggedly. They left the busy streets, turning into dull byways where great evil houses towered. Hives full, not of bees, but wasps, where life was but a knife thrusts Mr. Jones was done, his breath came in gasps, his knees shook and he stood at a corner, done. But the corner gave a vista of a dark street, each house with its fire-escape, the sky a mere vision. Standing utterly exhausted, he saw Green slow down, stand and wipe his face and look round. With a thrill Mr. Jones realised that the pursued was as done as the pursuer. He shrank back, hidden from view by a jutting pile of barrels outside a wine vault.

The man Green waited—then he went up some dirty steps, opened a door and disappeared. Mr. Jones counted the houses carefully. A few minutes later a second man hurried up and opened the same door. With a groan the little man recognised Henderson.

He was unarmed, alone, but he walked on calmly, meaning to get into the house somehow. He went cautiously. Lean faces peered at him, wondering what his game was; at the hat in his hand and his insignificant look of respectability.

Mr. Jones counted. He came to the grimy steps and found the blistered door ajar. He went up the stairs,

his feet making no sound in his deck shoes.

Stairs interminable, everlasting, and he did not dare to use the lift. Street doors with silence behind them, and at last at the very top he heard voices, and listened.

"I only tumbled to it at the last when I saw that cockney fool with his eyes glued to the woman's hat. Lawdee! we searched her cabin twice. Mosenthals were afraid. And then I seen that one pin was chained, an' that was enough. Got the wax off. Gee—here's a stone!"

Mr. Jones felt desperate. He knew perfectly well that if these men came out he would be killed. The stone steps led to a trap door to the roof. He went on up silently, with some idea that he might be able to signal, and found himself dizzily high on a flat roof, with a small open skylight beneath him, through which he could look down. He peered, keeping back.

Henderson and Green were bending over one emerald; it lay green and glorious on a dirty table, the wax making a little pool near it, the pin on the floor.

"We'll get Stiff to cut this up at once," said Hender-

n. "Get him, Rev.—get a move on."
"Take two to get him sober," grunted Green. " You

come too-bring some soda-water."

Mr. Jones heard a click, the emerald lay alone on the grimy boards and he had perhaps ten minutes. skylight was narrow; he could see that the window of the room was open and the iron fire-escape was close to it.

With a gulp he lowered himself from the roof.

"I have always had a bad head," said little Mr. Jones. He went backwards, swung in sickening terror at the window and was in the room. Next moment Mosenthals' emerald was in his pocket, and the pin stuck in his hat.

He left the panama on the table, a foolish thing to do, and said a reverent little prayer as he caught at the fire

escape.

Step by step the dizzy heights passed until he was near the evil street and looking, saw a man coming quickly along.

"Pretend to be workman," said Mr. Jones faintly, as he pulled off his coat. He was afraid of the stranger.

A lean dark young fellow hurried along—other people had passed but not looked up.

"Hello!" he said as Mr. Jones began to ascend.

"Troying the escape, sor," said Mr. Jones in stage "All the escapes along here—siree."

"Damn Irish, you'll try none right," snapped the man,

going in.

Then Mr. Jones dropped off; he scuttled, not knowing his way. He turned and twisted until he found a viperish gutter boy and asked for a big street.

"See!" said Mr. Jones, "a shilling to get me to the

trains or trams."

The gutter rat weighed the chances of earning a shilling

or leading the stranger to be robbed. Decided that Mr. Jones did not look worth robbing, dirty and coatless as he was, and demanded a dollar.

"That is four shillings. See when I get there," said Mr. Jones wisely; "if I have it over my tram fare I

might."

The rat led on until Mr. Jones heard the roar of the elevated and the whine of trams, but as he hurried towards the traffic he heard the sound of running feet. He flung two shillings to the rat and ran himself.

"Here he is," shrilled the child, tearing back to get largesse from the followers if he could. "Ye're a

crook, sure."

Little Jones ran with tears in his eyes. He was out in the humming Bowery, the elevated blotting out the sky, the whole place seething as if some great iron cauldron boiled up prosperity and rush, and he tore towards a big policeman who guarded a crossing, the gutter-snipe hanging about.

"Officer," yelled Mr. Jones, "put me into a tram.

Don't let them get me."

The astounded policeman felt himself grabbed by the coatless little man who poured out incoherent explanations, and next moment was hailed by three well-dressed but breathless youths who were evidently in pursuit. One wore a new hat.

"They'll shoot me," said little Jones, getting behind the policeman, "they'll take my body. Officer, I've Rockfeller's emeralds on me. Don't give them my body.

Don't!" He spun with the man.

Here the policeman remarking that he'd give him something if he didn't let go, the little man spun so as to keep a shield between him and the three wolfish, snarling faces.

"Sir, he's our brother, a looner," drawled Green.

"Say, hand him over. He got clear just now."

Green's hand went to his hip pocket, and the policeman paused.

"Officer, for God's sake, take me dead or alive to

Mr. Samuel P. Rockfeller. I've got his emeralds. Keep my corpse."

A revolver spat. Mr. Jones felt a sting in his arm and a voice shrieked "Archibald." A second voice, coldly

grim, said, "That hanged little ass-drunk."

He saw Mr. Rockfeller raging coldly. A breakdown had made him late, and he had at Anna Jones' entreaty driven blindly round New York. Rockfeller had sent a blighting cable to Mosenthals in which he cursed all fools.

A second policeman bore down on the group; the wolfish faces melted into the crowd, and Mrs. Jones clasped her dirty husband.

"Archibald! All alone out in that great city," she

said.

"My dear, I know the principal names," said Mr. Jones meekly. "Oh dear, I am exhausted. This is

the Bowery, it has trams."

The policeman wished to know if he was to be made a mulberry-bush for any lunatic who wished to take up the game in the Bowery, and was appeased by Rockfeller explaining savagely that the man had lost jewels which he was in charge of, so must be excused.

"I followed the thieves," said Mr. Jones, "to their

house."

"Can you give any account of the house, the position? It had a fire-escape and a skylight—that in New York is strange," said Rockfeller bitingly. "You shall tell the police."

He pulled out a card and the members of the force thawed. The large man whom Mr. Jones had clung to was of opinion that his life had been risked, though he

melted a little as he heard some of the story.

He remarked tersely that rabbits should not pursue rats; took all their addresses and chivied the crowd

away.

The big auto glided along, cleaving the roaring traffic, sliding, twisting, the huge power of her scarcely exerted, until they slipped into the quiet city where rich men live.

Mr. Jones gasped as he was ushered into a cool hall, where slim, dim marble nymphs held silver fountains, and huge ice blocks were hidden by massed ferns. There was a faint smell of paint, and the aggressive newness of a recently done-up house.

Mr Jones had sat silent in the car; he felt weak and dizzy, and his heart was thumping unevenly. He went meekly into the hall, and as meekly listened to an order

for cocktails.

"Not taking alcoholic drinks," he said. "But any-

thing mild, sir.

Rockfeller rang up a couple of numbers and came back. Mr. Jones was sipping something lemony and spicy and feeling a glow of strength.

"Now then," snapped the multi-millionaire. "Par-

ticulars of your absurd pursuit."

Little Mr. Jones drew himself up.

"Having taken an engaged taxi, sir, and found the hatless apache, Green, I ran after him, cunningly secreted myself and entered the 'ou—house."

At this Rockfeller delivered his opinion as to rank

folly, and drank a cocktail himself.

"And I trust this stone is not injured," said Mr. Jones, pulling it out.

"You—you've got my emeralds?" howled Rockfeller.
"But what else did I go after the thieves for?" said

Mr. Jones simply, removing the hatpin.

"Go on—tell it—go on." Rockfeller held the great green wonders in his hands and the others crowded round. "Looked through a skylight—go on—down the fire-escape—got the stones. Go on—go on. Gee! what a man."

"And returned the hat," said Mr. Jones, "so they

knew who had unlaired them."

"But twenty thousand—Christopher Columbus! You're the eighth wonder," gasped Rockfeller, gripping Mr. Jones' hands. "You atom—you creature—yet——"

"Archibald never fails Mosenthals," said Anna Jones,

speaking calmly, rubbing her very sore head.

"Fire-escapes—a gang of crooks. His life in his hands. Hi, there, send my secretary. I'm sending a cable. What I should like to see," said Rockfeller, "is that crook's face when he reads to-morrow's papers. Lord! to be done by you."

Mr. Jones sipped his soothing cocktail feeling its glow.

He suspected alcohol and said so.
"Lemons," said Rockfeller. "American variety."

He wrote a cable.

"Tell the detectives your Mr. Jones single-handed recovered the emeralds. And you'll all dine here-no, not in the cable, Creeds."

Gladys Hartley, who had hovered near the tired little

man, looked round uneasily.

"Major Greer?" she said. "We missed him rushing

off the ship."

"He was seeing to Miss de Vere's things," said Anna Jones, "and wrangling with the customs for her, I think.

Miss Hartley drew herself up. "Then I shall be delighted to dine," she said. "I do not join my friends

until to-morrow.

Little Mr. Jones felt quite pleased that he had not been obliged to make this statement. He looked approvingly at his wife.

"Major Greer is so popular," he said feebly, sipping his iced drink. "Very pungent lemons, Mr. Rock-

feller," he added, "very."

The lemonade which Mr. Jones drank for dinner was also pungent and sparkled, but the little man wanted reviving.

When Mr. Samuel Mosenthal read the first cable he swore and rushed to his brother.

"See here—you!!!" he gulped. Mr. Amos read, with deliberation:

"'Your Mr. Jones has lost my emeralds. Idiotic hat-pin stolen. Necklace useless. Cannot forgive not sending a man not a rabbit. Rockfeller.'"

Mr. Amos Mosenthal put the cable down and drew a devil sadly.

"Our sums have gone astray," he said. "Poor Jones." "This," said Mr. Samuel, "will be a lean year, brother."

Mr. Amos opened the second cable later on.

He read it—he looked at his brother.

"They've probably got Iones in for theft." sneered Samuel.

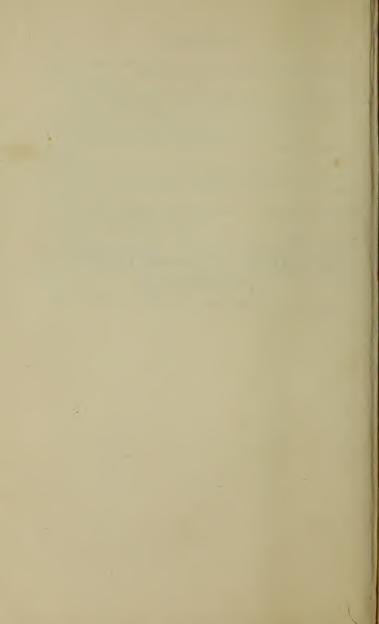
Mr. Amos in silence handed across the cable: "Your Mr. Jones alone followed thieves recovered stones particulars follow."

Then came one from Mr. Jones: "Report safe de-

livery to Rockfeller. Jones."
"Samuel," said Mr. Amos Mosenthal, "why cannot one 'phone New York? I want to speak to Napoleon Jones. I'll send a wireless," said Mr. Amos, putting on his brother's hat and walking out, "and I'll tell Bee Hanley."

Mr. Samuel, bewildered, picked up the two cables.

## MR. JONES HAS ANOTHER ADVENTURE



## MR. JONES HAS ANOTHER ADVENTURE

R. ARCHIBALD JONES, clerk to Mosenthals, stayed on in New York as Mr. Samuel P. Rockfeller's guest—the millionaire could not do too much for him. He would sit with a puzzled expression on his face, looking at Mr. Jones, and say "Wonderful!"

Detectives interviewed the little man, who told them he considered London's police system far more efficient.

"I assure you," said Mr. Jones to a smiling youth whose reputation was so great that crooks had been heard to say that Clem Jordan could go among the rattlers as one of themselves and, 'cept he wouldn't bite, never be found out, "I assure you, Mr. C. Jordan, that in our London, shooting episodes in the streets would be quite impossible. And the policemen are civil. Kept to put women across the streets, you say? Well, there is London," said Mr. Jones proudly. "In England if thieves found that they had been outwitted by one more astute than themselves"—Clem Jordan sank quite limply into a chair, muttering, "Highball Jim—Verdant Sam"—"they, "said Mr. Jones, "would have gone away and hidden."

"Poker's our game," said Jordan drily; "they bluffed. If they could have got you even dead they would also have got Rockfeller's emeralds. They have knives which don't leave a drop of blood; a prod—you go down. 'Our mad brother's fainted. We take his corpse'—see?

that was their idea."

"I saw. Most unpleasant and most transparent," said Mr. Jones. "But it should be impossible. Give me London Mr. Jordan, sir—law and order, and thieves

kept in safe places."

The future Mrs. Rockfeller, a lovely fragile blonde, also thanked Mr. Jones for rescuing her jewels. He was asked to lunch, and told her how to cultivate sweet-peas.

"Just too cunning you are, Mr. Jones," she said, hiding your desperate courage and talking of sweet-

peas."

"I am so much more at home with the sweet-peas,"

said Mr. Jones humbly.

Rockfeller put the little man in the hands of a young clerk who was given a holiday for the occasion. Mrs. Jones, exceedingly ill at ease in an hotel where Mr. Rockfeller had installed them, and where every service cost money, found a kindred spirit in Mrs. B. Pinker and took to seeing shops. She was led through vast department stores with their lounges and baby crêches and big children's playgrounds, and wondered what London would think of them.

"Myself, I think shops should be shops without the Serpentine enclosed," she said dubiously, looking at

some children shovelling at a heap of sand.

Mrs. Jones priced and took notes of almost everything in the provision department, and she stared wistfully at the fruit. Golden oranges, scarlet tomatoes, grapes, baskets of peaches at prices she had never dreamt of. One could take a dozen late peaches home and not

count it an extravagance.

James B. Pinker on request took Mr. Jones round New York. To the Bowery, to China Town, where the Orientals padded in their woven hemp slippers; to the Italian quarter, to the seemingly endless nest of cities which make New York. They saw Maddison Gardens and the golden statue of Flora; they travelled to Atlantic city to be swallowed in the noise on the beach; they dined in strange little restaurants, or chopped up quick lunches, Mr. Jones getting violent indigestion because he considered it his duty to swallow the sandwiches

almost whole as if in violent haste.

During the rush of sightseeing, Mr. Jones lost sight of Gladys Hartley and her admirers. But he reported favourably in a long letter to Mr. Amos Mosenthal. He had pledged himself to try to break up the bond between the firm's niece and a charming but impecunious Major Greer, and advance the cause of Colonel Hume, who was covered with decorations which he had not won on the field of battle. Mavis de Vere, a pretty musical comedy star, was playing in New York and sent Mr. Jones tickets for her show. At it he saw Major Greer in a box and in a bad humour. Having flung an enormous bouquet on to the stage, Peter Greer spied Mr. Jones and beckoned to him.

The little clerk, again feeling Judas-like, poked his

way to the box.

"Fed up with America," grunted Greer. "Miss Hartley's pals asked me down to Newport—they've a palace there, but I—don't care for it. You kind of feel they want to enclose bits of the sea, those people. And there's a—a—a—fellow—Gip C. Hockley, two hundred horse-power racer, private aeroplane, two steam yachts, and no digestion—that kind of chap." Major Greer smoked moodily, being hidden in the back of the box. "Hume's got a back seat, anyhow," he burst out, "that's one thing—and the flying loot."

Mr. Jones began to think he had better go to Newport. From this outburst he gathered that G. C. Hockley

admired the firm's niece.

"Mavis de Vere," he began—"Major—you an 'er-

"She's a good sort," snapped Peter. "Lets me take her out and grouse to her. Who's always shadowing you, Jones? Saw a chap pow-wowing at the box-office must get a seat, gave a card—management curled up and the chap sat near you."

"Following me?" said Mr. Jones in amazement—

and then he remembered some incidents: a greyhaired man whom he had seen six times in a day; a woman who had travelled twice with him in the elevated.

"No doubt he is Green and Henderson. Slippy Something and Verdured Sam," he said. "Jordan warned me—they . . . But I carry nothing of value save the pearl pin given me by Mr. Rockfeller."

"He's eyeing you now," said Greer. "The others are jazzing to-night. I ran up here to see Mavis. She's

kind, anyhow."

Mr. Jones slept fitfully in the hot bedroom in his hotel —all the labour-saving devices irritating him more than usual—then he 'phoned to Greenlawn, where the Mosenthals' niece was staying, and tooktrain to Newport.

The splendour of the millionaire's sea-palaces interested him. Marble pillars, great ball-rooms, verandahs clad in verdure. A glorious sea knocked apologetically on the beach and Mr. Jones felt that anyone or anything not belonging to New York society intruded. Huge automobiles purred past him, coloured servants eved

He wandered through a fretted iron gate, and rang a bell, but before he was answered, Gladys ran from a verandah.

"Oh, Mr. Jones, I'm so glad you've come," she said. Gladys Hartley had grown thin. Her eyes looked very big and her mouth trembled when she did not make it a contemptuous line.

"It's lovely here, but I—like England," she said. She took Mr. Jones on to a verandah with a huge vine growing on it. She called imperiously for fruit and

sandwiches.

Mr. Jones felt the cool breath from huge blocks of ice poised on fine gratings so that they might not drip.

A servant brought out a tray with dishes of peaches

and grapes and melons; on a second cocktails, grape

fruit and ice; a third carried sandwiches.

"We'll lunch here," said Gladys. "They are all swimming at Bailey's beach, but I got your message.

They'll lunch there in bathing-dresses with servants to wait on them."

"It's luxurious," said Mr. Jones, biting a peach.
"The wood lice, Miss Gladys, ate the only two of them

which matured for me last year."

"Too luxurious," said Gladys. "The peaches are woolly from riches; the fruit comes in sacks or chests, there is always a cart calling with something. We probably shan't be here half an hour before they change the ice and the flowers, and bring electric stoves if it's chilly. One must spend to live, apparently. The season is nearly over, but to-morrow there is a freak lunch at Mrs. van Dermot's, and goodness knows what it may be. All our food flowers, perhaps. We had a fruit one vesterday, starting with grapes, only they were caviarefancy the useless trouble of it, poking caviare into grapeskins—our oranges were oysters, our peaches cold chicken, and so on. It wearies me."

She nibbled a sandwich, breaking off pieces to give to

a snuffling Pekinese.

"That thing is priceless," she said. "It has its own electric carriage driven by a chauffeur, and sleeps in a four-post bed in a dog bedroom. Booh!" said Gladys, "and if I stay here"

"Stay here!" said little Mr. Jones.

"Stay here chained," said Gladys, "I might-oh, here is the possible padlock. Mr. Hockley-Mr. Jones."

A flabby-looking youth sauntered in, saying he had left the bathers swimming about. He eyed Mr. Jones as a spider might look at a fly not worth eating, and ate some sandwiches languidly, saving caviare was death to him.

"If you want lunch, order some," said Gladys; "this

is for Mr. Jones."

Gip Hockley peered at the little clerk.

"Jones?" he said. "Weren't you in the papers, Jones? Got bluffed by some crooks an' ran them to earth with a policeman. What——"
This was fame. Mr. Jones coloured and said, "No,

sir, quite alone," in huffy tones; "the policeman came

"Generally do," murmured Gip Hockley, looking at Gladys. "Wonderful nation, the English. Just do things and say things. Come for a drive? "-this to Gladys.

"I am entertaining Mr. Jones," said Gladys coldly.

"We talk of-sweet-peas."

Mr. Hockley turned his back on Mr. Jones and took out his cigarette case.

"Of course if he's taking an order—"he murmured

slightingly.

Gladys got up—she walked along the marble verandah, taking Mr. Jones on to a lounge where the statues made him blush. The walls were hung with old masters painted in Paris for credulous millionaires; if one wanted to get space one touched a table and it sank into the floor.
"Aladdin's palace," said Gladys. "Mr. Jones, y

"Mr. Jones, would

you like to be very, very rich?

"A garden," said Mr. Jones, "is my great joy, and if I were very rich a Scotch gardener would grow everything and I should be afraid to touch the flowers."

"Substitute everything in life for flowers and you've got it," said Gladys. "Pull at a golden bobbin and the latch goes up. Ilike planning things, saving to buy them.

Have you seen Major Greer lately, Mr. Jones? "
"Last night, in very bad spirits," said Mr. Jones—
Gladys looked up—"at the theatre," added the little man, remembering Mosenthals. "I go home in three days, Miss Gladys."

"So does Major Greer," said Gladys, "and I-I think America would be too stuffy in winter—the girls

look like hot-house flowers."

Mr. Jones felt uneasy. He had promised to further the suit of the excellent youth called Hume—this American was quite another affair. He tried in his mind to concoct a lucid cable, but failed, and sat on in uneasy silence. There was something about the flabby white man which he did not like. Gip Hockley would have

done better if he had wasted civility on the little clerk.

Automobiles purred outside, and Mr. Jones rose

nervously.

"I am dining with Major Greer to-night," he said. "A slap-up dinner, Miss Gladys, at Delmonico's. Very kind of him."

Miss Hartley yawned elaborately as she hoped Mr.

Jones would not be in the way-of Miss de Vere.

They went back along the verandah, rousing Gip Hockley from slumber. A great bunch of carnations had been brought to him, which he handed to Gladys, who immediately laid them down.

"They were fastened together with a gold clasp," she said as she walked on, "real gold set with diamonds.

Oh, dear-Riches!"

Little Mr. Jones blinked in the sunshine. He thought the villas oppressively ornate; even the beach looked exclusive. He made his way to the station and took the long journey to New York, where Pinker met him. Mr. Jones noticed that he was not often left alone.

Pinker was dining with them that evening.

Mr. Jones was direct, but discreet. He spoke of Newport, and he took ten minutes to work the conversation round to Gip Hockley.

"That waster," said Pinker. "Some—hog—Mr. Jones. Catch of the season, an' God help her that

catches him."

"He had a dissipated appearance," said Mr. Jones.

"He was almost rude to me."

"Guess you contaminated the air he breathed, in his opinion," said Pinker. "Prize rotter, Jones, he is. Ask any of the stage lot—they know."

Mr. Jones had just time before dinner to drive to Mavis de Vere's. He found the pretty actress in, and

plunged into his story.

Mavis de Vere listened in silence.

"Miss Hartley was nice to me," she said. "And I'd rather see her dead, Mr. Jones, than married to Gip.

I know him. For the rest, Mr. S. Mosenthal arranged matters with me just to encourage Peter. We're only friends—I've a husband in London, and one I like some, too. You undo what you've done now before it's too late."

Mr. Jones rushed off to dress. He had slightly shabby dress clothes, but Mrs. Jones was sure an overcoat was a necessity, and his was a mere mackintosh. She got to the 'phone to speak to Pinker, who offered to lend his and send it round.

It was a neat, light overcoat, just the thing, Mr. Jones said, as he admired himself in the glass.

He hurried, and was much too early at the

great restaurant.

A lean, obliging man bustled him into a large room, and took his coat: "660," he said. Mr. Jones thanked him nervously, saw an expectant hand and tipped discreetly. He felt the place must be lived up to.

The great restaurant was cooled by blocks of ice, but the air quivered with light and the babel of tongues. The three men had a little table in a corner, a bottle

in a pail of ice beside it.

Half-way through dinner, Pinker spied a friend, a very vivacious friend, dining close by. Mr. Jones had been persuaded to drink champagne. The light and the noise, the sense of luxuries and Pol Roger combined to unbalance him.

"See that man over there?" said Pinker, pointing to a smallish man sitting near them. "That's Francis Luckton, biggest 'tec in the world, they say. Up to something, of course, an' p'raps half the waiters 'tecs watching him. He's dining with a Russian Prince to-

night."

"He has got a cruel face," said Mr. Jones thoughtfully. At this point Pinker went to take coffee with his friend. Mr. Jones drank something green and innocent-looking, hearing it was cream of peppermints. "Crême de menthe meaning that," he said, and leant across the table.

"Major Greer," he said, "I am employed by Mosenthals. I owe a duty to them, but I think human 'arhearts should exonerate me, especially with Gip P. Hockley in the case."

Peter was looking thoughtfully at the empty

champagne bottle.

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"An' I'm a Judas," said little Mr. Jones. "A Judas wot 'as made a muddle, Major."

Peter looked at the liqueurs.

Little Jones did not notice. He plunged into the

story; he told of his idea.
"I am being false to Mosenthals," he whimpered, "but this American-Major, get her out of it before she takes him."

Peter Greer upset the ice-bucket as he caught the little

man's hands.

"You-think she cares?" he said.

"Oh, my goodness, she wouldn't be so snappy if she didn't," said Mr. Jones, showing a shrewd knowledge of human nature. "You should see Anna if I pays attentions! Cayenne ain't in it." And the little man looked wise.

"The trains take hours," said Peter, "but I can get down from the aerodrome. Will you come, Jones, and

help me out ? "

Anna has always forbidden me to go to Hendon," said Mr. Jones. "Yes, fly there, Major, an' I'll take

the blame."

Peter's expression repaid him; the boy forgot everything except his own absorbing thoughts. The restaurant was hot, they were going to a theatre, and Mr. Jones decided to stroll outside to get cool. He asked how much more he was to give for his coat and hat, and he got up while a raptly absent Peter settled the bill. Pinker coming back they had another liqueur.

"Little Jones gone out for some fresh air," said Peter.

"You've never let him go out alone?" said Pinker. "One of us watches him all the time. Those two crooks wrote to say they'd knife him."

Mr. Jones, walking proudly, admiring everything, went for his coat. He was a little dizzy, and the man was engaged with a youth who had mislaid his check. Now 690 and 660 look very like. Mr. Jones consulted the check, laid it down with a further tip, and said, "This is mine." The attendant glanced casually.

Mr. Jones put the coat on. He thought again that it looked well, and strolled out into the great thoroughfare. Giant signs winked at him incessantly, motors purred, he could hear the roar of the elevated in the distance. It had been raining and the pavement glimmered like

watered silk.

A man slipped out of the restaurant looking at Mr. Jones' coat, noting that a black thread hung between the shoulders.

"Fine night," he said.

Mr. Jones nodded, but did not answer. He was admiring the hugeness of New York. Even its traffic seemed mighty. He walked on for a few steps, feeling his face cool, and a cab drew up at the sidewalk.

Someone hailed him nasally. "Hi, sir, air yew a

doctor? A lady's fainted."

"I have some slight knowledge of first aid," said Mr. Jones importantly. "For a swoon—I should say smelling-salts, or a door-key if convenient."

He thought he heard a whisper of "Bluff."
"If you'd look to this, sir—it's my sister."

"Smelling-salts," said Mr. Jones, "and lay her flat." He came nearer the cab, looking in.

A woman lay rigid in a swoon.

"The nearest chemist," said Mr. Jones. "Run to him. Try feathers." He was impelled into the cab—the swooning lady's hands covered his mouth, a cold circle of steel pressed the nape of his neck.

"Caught, and not a word! You, Linkoff," whispered

a voice, "don't speak."

The cab swooped out into the wet road. Mr. Jones found himself looking at the reflections, at the gliding cars, the winking signs.

"Will you kindly set me down?" he said, showing no nervousness.

"Quiet-Linkoff."

The supposed invalid used one hand to discard a hat and veil, the other held the revolver to Mr. Jones' neck; the man who had pushed little Jones into the cab held another revolver.

"Oh, do be careful, those things might go off, though er—if it's mental, sir, of course they are not loaded."

The man's laugh made Mr. Jones shiver.

"What's the use of bluffing us, Linkoff?" he said

savagely.

"My name is Jones," said the little man, "and I am not a medical man. Kindly drive me to my hotel"—he gave the name—"at once."

Mr. Jones felt one must humour lunatics.

"Your name is Jones or Harris or Smith or—Gustav Linkoff—safely caught. No, don't move, the chauffeur won't stop if he hears a gun go off, and you'll be dead; but given that list we let you go. It gives us a chance to escape you—you fiend."

"Lunatics," thought Mr. Jones, "have very unpleasant

voices."

"It is most distressing," Mr. Jones sighed. "Kindly put me down. I sympathise with whatever troubles you, but my friends are waiting. I am going to a theatre."

The man opposite said, "Or to Hades," gloomily; the cab went on, they darted through mean streets, huge houses frowning bleakly.

"I must really ask you to put me down," said Mr. Jones. "Dear me, I am always coming in for adven-

tures."

"They should scarcely trouble you," the erstwhile woman sneered. "A man with your nerve. Come, the list, and we'll send you back—now—sure."

"If you are trying to blackmail Mosenthals, I am adamant," said Mr. Jones firmly. "The firm relies

on me."

"What prate has this worm of Jones and Mosenthals?" sneered the man, moving his revolver a little. "So great a fox, a weasel, a vampire sucking men's blood. Max marked you, but we thought you were at least a man—and of a man's stature."

"You are exceedingly rude," said Mr. Jones huffly, but, er—of course—New York is badly managed," he said. "Look here"—he tried diplomacy—"my friend has that list—of—er—er jewels—when we return

to the restaurant."

"It will be with you whether you ever use your throat to swallow food again. Now go quietly and in silence."

The cab stopped. Mr. Jones, the cold rim pressing his neck, was bustled across a sidewalk. A gloomy, dirty door opened, he was whirled into a lift which shot upwards at a sickening rate.

As he murmured of danger, it slackened; he was pushed across an unwashed stone landing and into a small room; a green blind drawn down, a huge centre lamp swinging

over a table clamped to the floor.

"Got him. Hey, Henri, Ladisloff, Triki-we have

got him-this Linkoff."

"If you will telephone to my wife," said Mr. Jones, "she will verify my credentials. You'll all be sorry for this."

He was too dazed to feel alarmed as he was thrust into a chair. Ten men fixed passionate, contemptuous eyes on him, five hands held revolvers and five knives which gleamed bluely.

"You havetracked us." The big man they called Henri broke into a strange language which rang musically.

"My French is-er-quite rusty," said Jones irritably.

"Pardon, commong, Mossoo?"

An evil creature with one finger missing spat out something feline and incomprehensible—he changed to French, to German. "He does not understand—Gustav Linkoff—hola!—does not know Polish, Russian—oh, you play your game well for time—you who track us in our own homes—you who dog honest anarchists."

"And a very proper thing to do if I could," said Mr. Jones. "Anarchists ought to be ashamed of them-selves. Hiding with clockwork bombs which miss kings and kill little sightseeing children."

"Nom d'un nom !-it is of a truth," said the big Henri

-into his beard.

They broke out furiously. As one in a dream, Mr. Jones watched the mobile, furious faces, the whicker of moving knives, the dull gleam of the revolver barrels. He listened to the chatter of tongues.

Ladisloff, a slender Pole, far gone in consumption.

spoke again, and Mr. Jones listened blankly.

"A charming language," he said, trying conciliation; Ladisloff said "B-r-r-r" and wiped his forehead. The big man Henri leant forward.

"We waste time," he said, "and man delays. See you worm, Linkoff, have it Engleesh."

Sitting in the hard chair, little Jones began to sift

some grains from the whirl of chaff.

It appeared that Gustav Linkoff was a tracker of men, a creature of many disguises, immune to death; that he held now a list of names of plotters-men who meant to strike some desperate blow for freedom, and that this list, which he had come to New York to complete, was to be handed to the authorities of all countries involved. It meant death to those upon it.

"You care not that it is for freedom we strugglefor the oppression of centuries. You come among us, you who know naught but English, and learn our secrets. You crumble our work, as diners crumble bread, between

your cruel fingers."

"But even supposing I had a list," said practical Mr. Jones, "I should have a copy at home on carbon paper,

my good men."

Nom d'un nom! When we see the names we go as rats to our holes, and—more." The ring of faces closed in under the light of the lamp, the knives flashed. "We should know who are our—betrayers," the word hissed through the hot room.

"Dear me—you Ladis—you very nearly cut the other gentleman's ear," said Mr. Jones warningly. "Do be careful. And—er——"

Ladisloff's look was blood-curdling.

"I may cut a man's throat—slowly—ere it is dawn," he breathed. "Oh, but slowly—yes, Linkoff—the kiss of the steel—no merciful swiftness—but slow, slow—against a scraggy neck."

Mr. Jones adjusted his collar; he asked if a crack

of window might be opened, he felt faint.

Henri raised the sash a little.

"And it seems to me," said Mr. Jones, "I speak dispassionately—that if you did get that list, you would kill some other people instead of being killed yourselves. I do come in for most distressing adventures," said Mr. Jones, "most. I really must ask you to let me go home, gentlemen—Mossoos, Polish Henri—I ask it."

They pressed on him. "The list, the list." Ladisloff's slim hands, burning with fever, searched Jones' pockets. With horror Mr. Jones saw the production of a suede card-case with cards in it marked M. de Vallon, of a silk handkerchief, two pairs of handcuffs and a derringer.

"You are not Linkoff and he stays as de Vallon at the Wardorf. You are Jones? Give us one proof—see,

your cards."

"All my shirts are carefully marked," said Mr. Jones faintly; "but this is one I purchased yesterday. Oh, dear—I borrowed the coat—from Pinker—Rockfeller's clerk."

"Rockfeller in it-nom d'un nom!" said Henri.

There was no list to be found—they got round him again, threatening; blue blades whickered close to him, one cut his cheek, and Mr. Jones went on asking, feebly now, for his wife.

"Ring up the hotel—ask for Pinker—for Mr. Rockfeller. I am Archibald Jones of Golders Green—The Acacias. It is an outrage—I shall write to *The Times*."

"Heat up some of these irons," snapped the swarthy man they called Triki. "Make him speak. He is

playing for time; do not trust him. Max makes no mistakes."

"He is en retard-Max," said Henri.

The men conferred together. Mr. Jones gathered that before he was done to death this Max must be found.

"You'll all be so worried when you find to-morrow that you have killed the wrong man," said Mr. Jones. "And I wish you all joy of your list, you canalls." Mr. Jones meant canaille, and fortunately his pronunciation made him unintelligible.

"You—canals—sapper—sapper—I've forgotten the end of the word," said Mr. Jones. "When you're all caught I shall not be sorry. And if you won't use

the 'phone-"

One of them slapped him on the mouth; they drew together, muttering, threatening, a human kaleidoscope of villainy. Two of them turned and lashed Mr. Jones' hands behind him deftly; they gagged him.

"Now we leave you, we go to find Max. In half an hour, less, we shall be back, then you can give us the names or we shall kill you slowly. Once we have your

list you go-we pledge our honour."

"I should be sorry to trust to it," said Mr. Jones,

just before they gagged him.

They filed out stealthily. The big Henri lingered,

staring at Jones.

"You are brave, lapin," he said, "you bluff well, M. Linkoff; why not give it up?" He loosed the gag. "You dog us without pity; we are wild men, but we believe we do good. See? They call you a human tiger, but yet you look it not. I have a son, a mere child—led into this latest-call it folly. He is my all; for him would I die. I can get him to fly and lead another life, but it is in your hands. Ah, Gustav Linkoff, when he dies you kill two men and a weak woman. I speak to you, man to man. We shall kill you-dead! The world loses its great tracker of crime. Be merciful."

"This is a most distressing adventure," said Mr.

Jones, blinking.

The man's voice had rung with such strange pathos. "Nom d'un nom!" Henri leant closer. "Linkoff, you'll do it. You'll save Valdi—Valdi's mother. Ah, I succeed."

"If I were Linkoff," Mr. Jones said. "But I am

Archibald Jones-of London. I swear it, Henri."

"One is a fool to talk to weazels." Henri fixed the gag again and strode out. The door shut softly. Mr. Jones was alone. He looked round the room. It was smallthe table curiously thick and strong. He saw a box on the floor containing money. Mr. Jones felt very upset. He felt sure that it must be all right, but he struggled free and wandered about looking for something to cut his cords against; his hands were lashed behind him. There was a file on the table and one of the wicked looking knives. Mr. Jones managed to bring his wrist over the blade. He cut his hands, but he worked warily and felt the cord snick at last. He rubbed his wrists and ran to the window. It was barred; no hope of getting out. He loosed his gag and shouted, but no one heard him, or if they did took no notice. Cries were of too frequent occurrence in that quarter.

Far down he could just see little dots moving, no wheeled traffic. Then he looked at the box of coins.

New dollars, bright and fresh.

"If I threw some out," said Mr. Jones, "they might look up." He shied a dollar and looked, saw a dot stop and another join it. He threw another and another, flinging them fast. Black figures gathered, staring up. Mr. Jones shouted "Help!" but they did not seem to hear. He shied on—the crowd broke and massed again suddenly.

The door opened and the men poured in wildly.

"Sapristi! there is a crowd outside. Two plainclothes men were passing. Oh, viper, if they come up!"

The man Triki rushed at Mr. Jones. "I am ruined," he shrieked. "Ruined by this . . . Who tied him? Who?"

"My God! it is the wrong man." A clean-shaven

youth dressed as a waiter sprang forward. "It is not Linkoff. I put a thread on our man's coat—thus." He held up the coat.

"It was very officious of you," said Mr. Jones, " and

the cause of a most distressing adventure."

"And this misery took the wrong one," said Max. could not get away, there was such a rush. Linkoff is still at coffee."

"Viper! He has thrown out my dollars. I am ruined. The worm shall die; they come up," wailed

Triki.

Triki swung round and flung a knife at Mr. Jones.

missing him, then he took aim with another.

"Non, he do no harm. He was sorry." Henri tweaked the little man to one side. Triki, lunging with desire to kill, struck on, and Henri went down with a choking sob. He coughed as he lay, his face leaden.

"Now you have killed a man," said Mr. Jones. "Oh, poor Henri." He went down on his knees, careless of

the fact that Triki had poised for a third stroke.

Someone hissed a foreign word. Triki drew back, throwing his knife. The gang turned and poured out, leaving Mr. Jones alone with the dying man, and two plainclothes men dashed into the room.

"Here, yew," spat one of them, yanking Mr. Jones to

his feet, "got yew at last."

"Kindly 'phone to my wife, officer," said Mr. Jones, "and to a medical man. This poor creature is dying. Dear, dear!"

One of the police remarked coldly that it was easy to

see who had killed him and why.

"For throwing your dud coin out of the window. We've been after yew for a long while an' got yew at last."

More men came into the room; they pounced as terriers might have on rats upon the various implements and tools. One held up a cast admiringly, they handled little braziers and dies; they lighted on paper bills, and Mr. Jones felt the snap of cold steel on his wrists.

"'Ere! you let me go," he said, angry now.

have always told you that London was properly managed and New York mismanaged."

"Tell it to the court," said a man they called Lefroy.

"Get a doc., Cy—this blighter's past speech."

"If I am to be now taken for a coiner my patience will give way," said Mr. Jones irritably. "'Phone, 'phone my wife; 'phone Mr. Rockfeller, constable. If you persist in this folly, I—I—shall get Mr. Amos to write to The Times."

"Trying the insanity stunt," said Lefroy absently.

"Hello, they've got this creature's pals. Good!"

"My—pals," said little Mr. Jones. "My God! I, who was brought here in mistake for something called Gustav Linkoff"—Lefroy started—"I, who by my coolness and presence of mind saved my own life—the New York police did not. 'Phone your Mr. Jordan. He knows me. I was trapped by this gang of thieves."

A shot rang outside, followed by a hoarse shriek.

Henri's eyelids quivered.

"My pover Henri," said Mr. Jones softly.

"Yew were only brought here, and yew know the man by his Christian name. Pooh, you make me laugh,"

said Lefroy.

"You get Mr. Jordan. Get Mr. Rockfeller," snapped Mr. Jones. "Get Pinker and my wife. I protest against this outrage. 'Phone before you destroy your professional reputation, Mr. Lefroy." Mr. Jones spoke with dignity. "Oh, I don't know why I am marked down for adventures," he said sadly.

But Lefroy wavered a little.

"Here, what's this?" he said, thrusting a die into

Jones' face.

"It appears to be a die," said Mr. Jones. "I am astounded you should not know yourself. I have seen illustrations of them in magazine articles."

Lefroy sat on the steady table and caressed his chin with his hand. "We've made some stir over this show.

He----'

Mr. Jones' friend Jordan ran into the room.

"Some catch," he said. "Who nailed it?"

"I," said Mr. Jones. "I—Mr. Jordan. Not these rude persons." Jordan turned and stood staring.

"' I,' said the sparrow, 'with my bow and arrow,'" he

said heavily.

"Facetiousness is out of place," said little Jones coldly. "And now, kindly tell these blunderers that I am not the coiner."

"I declare one wouldn't know what you might be," said Jordan, undoing the handcuffs. "And I'd like

the story right away.'

Mr. Jones, glancing unamiably at Lefroy, told it

simply.

"Strikes me, Jones, you were mighty near Heaven,' said Jordan slowly, as he felt the edge of the knife.
"Now what made you think of throwing the coins out—what?"

"Being a man of resource, and knowing the cupidity of Americans," said Mr. Jones. "I should like to go home when poor Henri is attended to. I am tired. I have missed a theatre."

A shabby doctor bustled into the room, made an examination, and thought Henri might live or might

not.

Jordan replied, drily, that one or the other was possible,

and asked Mr. Jones to come outside.

In another room police were guarding most of the gang. Max had escaped, and Triki lay dead on the

dirty floor.

"Why I, who even hate squashing slugs—I always carry a brine bath—should be so mixed up with blood-shed——"said Mr. Jones piteously. "Yes, I identify all these creatures, but they did not show han—animosity to me, remember. It was this Linkoff they wished to slay."

"We've been wanting this coiner's den for months," said Jordan. "We came up here twice, to find an old hag cooking. Her duds are in the cupboard there—they blinked me. Say, would you join our force, Jones?"

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"I could not leave Mosenthals, even though I feel I should be of value to you," replied Mr. Jones. "And I dislike bloodshed—as I have told you. Two dead men. Oh dear!"

Lefroy put a hand over his mouth.

The message to Mr. Jones' hotel brought down Anna Jones, Pinker, and Peter Greer, all filled with anxiety.

"Rockfeller's got a 'tec always watching Jones, too," said Jordan, "man of mine; but Jones must have slipped out from the restaurant."

Mr. Jones went back to poor coughing Henri.

"I'll try to save your boy, Henri," he whispered.

" I might."

Mr. Jones was very tired, but he insisted on driving back to Delmonico's, where he found the owner of the

coat which he had taken.

Linkoff—he passed as M. de Vallon at present—was a slight man with melancholy eyes. He was a master of disguises. His teeth were prominent, he had a dozen sets; he could twist his features, paint on scars. He escaped death by fractions of inches, and next day was among the enemies as one of themselves. When Jordan brought up Mr. Jones, Linkoff's eyebrows went up. He took the coat, listened to the story and touched the black thread softly.

"If they'd got me," he said, "well-I think it would

have been over by now."

"You would possibly not have thought of the coins," said Mr. Jones.

Linkoff eyed him curiously.

"I don't suppose I should have thought of anything more if it had not been that late diners came in, and this Max was delayed—that is, had I been taken. But now, monsieur—""

Mr. Jones intimated that he wished for a private conversation. Yes, he would take coffee. Supper had not commenced; the room was comparatively empty.

Mr. Jones leant across the table stating his case. He gave details of his adventure, even repeating his remarks, until Linkoff was troubled by a cough and hid his face in a handkerchief. But Henri-Henri had saved his life; he wanted to save Henri's son.

"It is an awful thing to track these people," said Mr.

Jones.

Linkoff's eyes saddened. "A human bloodhound must be relentless, Mr. Jones of London. I track bloodhounds possessed by rabies. This plot which I have unearthed would have taken young sons, and old fathers would have rocked the world. You "—he took out a pocket-book-" you are the man who came down the fire-escape. Join me, Mr. Jones. Your face and manner are assets of value incalculable." He threw back his head. "I wish I'd seen them when they talked Polish and Russian to you, and you did not understand—oh, wondrous little man! Yes, you saved me, Mr. Jones, and I am grateful."

"Then just take Henri's son off that list," said Mr.

Jones, "and the obligation will be repaid, sir."

At this Linkoff broke down. He laughed aloud and without restraint. He beckoned to Jordan and ordered drinks, Mr. Jones taking sips of his when assured it was lemonade.

"Mr. Jones," said Linkoff, "you make a mistake. Yes." He pulled out a small piece of paper and taking his

fountain-pen drew a line through one small sign.

"Henri's son," he said, "can get away in safety. I did not think—think that I should do such a foolish thing for anyone, Mr. Jones. Yet you made me do it.' "God made you do it," said Mr. Jones gently.

Linkoff put down his glass.

"Almost thou makest me a believer," he said grimly. "Now go to bed, and to-morrow you shall see Henri if he is alive. In any case his son is safe."

Mrs. Jones took her husband home, chiding him

severely for his carelessness in getting lost.

"You seem to delight in slumming, Archibald," she said, "and then ringing up the police. Now have an aspirin and get to sleep."

Mr. Jones' story never came fully to his wife, who did not read the papers. He was allowed to escape the full trial, his evidence being taken down, but he took a street car to the hospital where Henri lay, and armed with a card sent by Jordan was admitted.

Big Henri lay still and quiet, his eyes alone restless

and full of agonised thought.

He smiled slightly as he saw the little clerk. The nurse shook her head behind his bed.

Mr. Jones bent down and whispered,

"I have seen Linkoff. Your son must get away. He is free-no longer a marked man."

"Oh, my!" said the nurse, as the patient turned

scarlet. "Oh, my!-well, it doesn't matter."

The scarlet ebbed and the torment died out of the man's eves.

"Nom d'un nom-c'est la vérité?" he whispered.

"Pas la blague, M'sieur?"

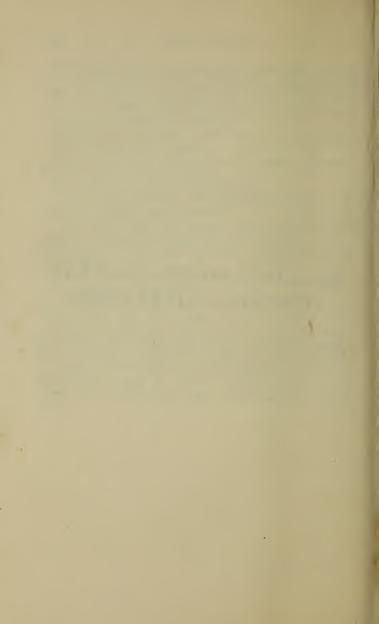
"Vérité! we-we-si-si," said Mr. Jones. "Real

verity, Henri-get off a letter."

Two hours later the nurse rang Mr. Jones up to say that Henri was sleeping peacefully and would probably live. He had not a dog's chance this morning, she said.

"And in all this excitement I had quite forgotten the firm's niece," said Mr. Jones. "I am really tired of strain and of adventures, but I trust this also will be right."

## MR. JONES MAKES SEVERAL MATCHES AND RETIRES



## MR. JONES MAKES SEVERAL MATCHES AND RETIRES

URING his wanderings in New York, Mr. Archibald Jones had come across a necklace which he had looked at carefully. It was a florid, badly-set affair, the jewels worked into the semblance of daisies, the centre of each a tinged diamond, the petals rubies, emeralds, sapphires, chrysoprase and turquoise, and the whole thing finished with a tassel of pearls and joined by large square stones.

Now Mr. Jones was a judge. He saw that good and cheap jewels had been set together, but so far as he could see the big emeralds were flawless, the sapphires deeply blue, the rubies pigeons'-blood and the centres yellow diamonds. He discarded discoloured turquoises and lumps of chrysoprase and aquamarine, and he noted a huge pear-shaped pearl at the end of the tassel, also a particularly pink diamond used as one square stone.

Mr. Jones saw it in a second-hand shop, where its florid gold setting had evidently caused it to escape notice. Each flower was encased in gold, and he cabled Mr. Amos Mosenthal. He then went down and bought the necklace, unaware that one of his shadowers followed him; and he took it to his hotel, where he placed it with the manager.

Having secured return passages in the Glorytania, Mr. Jones was anxious to leave New York. He said it was too high, and the golden lady hanging over it was

too symbolic of its spirit.

"Shifting about, too," said Mr. Jones, as he looked

up at Flora's flaunting beauty. "I prefer the Park to Maddison Gardens, and the Albert Memorial to any gilded female," he told Pinker.

Mr. Pinker had seen the Albert Memorial, and grinned

gently.

On the morning following Mr. Jones' dangerous adventure he was called to the 'phone.

"We must see you. Have arranged for a flight down. Will be at landing place. Go at once to—Aerodrome.

they'll ring you up."

"Oh, my goodness," said Mr. Jones. "Anna, I have never flown, it is quite dangerous." But he looked for a collar. "I cannot show lack of courage, Anna."

"What I believe," said Anna Jones, "is that you are Methuselah reincarnated, Archibald, otherwise you'd be dead long ago, all the follies you go in for. Don't you go a-flying, Archibald. I'm off to the Pinkers."

Little Mr. Jones wondered what could have happened at Newport—and was again disturbed by a ring from the aerodrome. A flight was arranged, he was to come at

once.

He inquired his way, travelled by street car and elevated, and car again, and reached a vast place where a flying machine was just humming out.

"Iones—flight arranged for Newport." A clerk took

his name.

He walked inside and was directed to a small twoseater.

"Just tinkering her up a little," said a man; "over

there she is."

Mr. Jones looked at a small machine; he saw her started, and the mechanic's coat as he bent over the machinery was torn and fluttered by the gale; the noise was deafening.

Mr. Jones kicked the earth lovingly. Someone took off his hat and gave him a leather cap and a coat;

he machine was ready.

Mr. Jones clambered over the wings, noting how flimsy

the whole thing was; he lowered himself into an oily cockpit and sighed.

"If it was not that it was the firm's niece—" he said. "Please tell the driver to go carefully, young man-and

not too fast. I feel sure I shall be sick."

The great whirr of the engine sounded, they rose lightly as a bird might have. A rush of air took Mr. Jones' breath away; they were rising, rising, high above houses above the tall city, up in the fair blue sky.

They banked, and Mr. Jones blinked.

"Be careful, young man," he said, oblivious of the fact

that his voice was torn away.

Then he forgot to be afraid. He laughed when they fell into an air pocket; he held on, peering out, and the rush of cold air went as wine to his head.

Far down there were pigmies; earth-bound, hot, perspiring. He was as some winged god or great eagle,

master of the air.

Little toy trains puffed on their toy railways; the world was strangely green, seen from above. The pilot, smiling a little, dived down, and Mr. Jones felt as if the whole of his being was going out of the top of his head.

"This will upset me," said Mr. Jones. "Driver.

please put on your brake."

They were rushing now, the power of the two-hundred horse-power engine making the frail structure thrill. It was difficult to breathe, and Mr. Jones' knuckles were white from their long clasp on the sides. He began to feel lonely. If he were afraid, if he got ill, he was alone in the clouds. A shriek for help would be torn from his

lips.

"What an exciting story would be written," thought Mr. Jones, "of someone dying back here and being discovered on landing, or of the passenger shooting the pilot and then assuming control when upsetting. I shall mention it to someone interested in cinemas. Oh, dear, I do wish he would sit down quietly." They dropped, the earth seemed to rush up to meet them, the marble palaces of Newport and the sea washing apologetically on Bailey's Beach could be seen. The pilot circled quietly, Mr. Jones objecting to the banking. and they drifted towards a green field.

Nearer still, and they landed as a bird might have, so lightly, taxied for a second, and the rush and whirr

ceasing made the world full of oppressive silence.

Mr. Jones fumbled at his straps; his hands were cold.

"Oh, we knew you'd come," said Gladys Hartley,
"we settled with Mr. Sykes here last night. We couldn't wait for trains." The exceeding happiness on their faces left no doubt in Mr. Jones' mind.

He touched the grass joyfully, and yet almost with

regret.

"There is something—para—para—paradisical—how can one put it?—about flying, Miss Gladys," he said. "But, oh dear, what will the firm say-and how they

will blame me!"

"I should have stayed in America if you had not confessed what a traitor you were last night," said Gladys. "We go to town to-morrow and stay a night before sailing, stay with the Rockfellers, and there's a great fancy dress bathing-party this afternoon. But it's getting cold for bathing, I think."

Mr. Jones, feeling rather sea-sick, listened to the raptures of two foolish young people. He sighed as he thought of Mr. Samuel and Mr. Amos, but he was glad

at heart.

They persuaded the little man to assume a mask and

domino and join the party.

Mr. Jones did not feel repentant when he saw G. P. Hockley dressed as Neptune, glittering in silver tights which accentuated his lumpy figure, and in hot pursuit of a masked nymph who swam away from him.
"That's Kitty Halland," whispered Gladys, "wearing

my dress. She's the dandiest swimmer here, and he

thinks it's me. We arranged that."

The nymph disappeared into one of the many grottos erected, pursued by the silver sea god; they did not come out.

"She rather wants to marry him herself," said Gladys. Oh, Mr. Jones, what does money matter?"

"Well, you know, it does," said Mr. Jones. "Cheap

flower seeds now are often unreliable."

Little Jones felt that his mission was over. Part of it had been a glorious success and must counteract his failure.

A disconsolate-looking Ink-blot—they all wore their names—lounged on the shore, shivering, and looked with hurt expression at Miss Hartley. It was Colonel Hume, who felt inclined to quarrel with all things relating or related to Mosenthals.

He had been encouraged to come to America by Mr. Samuel Mosenthal, with the idea that the journey would complete all arrangements. The difficulty of Peter Greer having—apparently—been wiped from his path, the far larger difficulty of the American had loomed up, and now Peter Greer was back again.

Colonel Hume gloomed at the waves and at Gladys and at little Mr. Jones and said it was cold, and was offended when a slender American heiress threw a jelly-fish at him. Jelly-fish seemed to have no business to

intrude on Bailey's Beach.

When the chilled bathers got into warm clothes and sat down to eat a luxurious luncheon, Mr. Jones, feeling nervous, stayed near Miss Hartley. The shelter of his mask and domino was reft from him, and he was afraid of all the moneyed people. He listened to their chatter in amazement.

The sky was overcast, the sea heaving restlessly, its hue steel-grey, and everyone felt that the summer was

really over.

Mr. Jones began to talk of his find—the necklace. "Personally, I believe it to be priceless—in partlly he said, "with some stones of fabulous value."

So Gladys remarked that she would take it and wear

it.

"In which case a great responsibility will have been lifted from my mind," said Mr. Jones thoughtfully.

"Don't you ever talk of fabulous values in public, little man," said Hockley crossly. He and the nymph had returned, flushed below their pinched blueness; "the very fellow handing your ice pudding may be a crook."

"The very word," said Mr. Jones, "causes me to shiver, Mr. G. P. Hockley. My experiences have been so very alarming—apâches, duchesses, baronets, fire-escapes—and they all seem parts of bad dreams. Newee Jumongs would be the French," said Mr. Jones, proud

of his knowledge.

A French marquis sitting near said "Si, si," gravely. Mr. Jones cabled the firm next day, and his answer in code was permission to give Gladys the necklace. But there was also a cable of which he knew nothing sent to Rockfeller, who sent for little Jones to bid him good-bye.

"If you want a sit. apply to me," said the millionaire. "It's the chaps who butt in blindly who win through. You just go on, Jones, with no idea where you

are going to, eh?"

"I do my duty," said little Jones firmly, "to the firm."

"And before you cost them some money in doing it they should settle you down to grow sweet-peas," said Rockfeller thoughtfully. "Got a necklace on your mind now, returning—this is my job, I think."

Mr. Jones, Gladys, and the two soldiers bade good-bye

Mr. Jones, Gladys, and the two soldiers bade good-bye to New York on a crisp September morning, the sea dancing bluely, its little wavelets fringed with white.

The Glorytania throbbed, ready to start, and Mr. Jones was again in the saloon, with Anna, his wife, travelling

second.

He noted nervously that the curious rococo necklace was clasped about Gladys Hartley's neck, but otherwise he was at peace. He was looking after it, of course, but it was not the same onerous duty as the minding of the emeralds.

Mr. Jones had learnt to look with suspicion on his

fellow men. He found that a certain ingenuous looking youth, by name Hawtry, followed him and was, Mr. Jones considered, too friendly.

Hawtrey was a slim, dandified man, with a vacant expression, and he was also friendly with the firm's

niece.

Called by Gladys into the state-room one day, Mr. Jones was horrified to see a letter from Samuel Mosenthal

lying about fully signed—and also Gladys' cheque book.
"Supposing anyone came along and copied his signature," gasped Mr. Jones, "and it's the same bank."
"Oh, the firm sign '& Co.,' don't they?" said Gladys

carelessly. "And no one would-so dangerous, forgery."

Mr. Jones was nevertheless alarmed. He sent a wireless message which made Mr. Samuel use bad language.

"Be careful of cheques Jones," was distinctly

am biguous.

"Mad," said Samuel Mosenthal. "Mad, all through. And now becoming impertinent. This Jones is getting swelled head," he spat to Mr. Amos his brother.

"Wireless so expensive too," said Amos absently.

"Be careful of cheques—the stations picking that up. He has some maggot in what he calls his brain."

The Glorytania picked up a message addressed to

Archibald Jones which was brief.

"Unintelligible nonsense received Mosenthal."

Mr. Jones was ruffled. He had found a kindred spirit, a Colonel Verney who lived in Yorkshire, and who talked of flowers to the little man.

He even invited Jones cordially to come to the Towers

and see his sweet-peas on his return.

"Under glass?" said Mr. Jones.

"Sweet-peas are summer flowers, said Verney hastily.

"Er—yes, under glass, of course, "yes, naturally."
This Verney was a sensible looking grey-headed man, who had been prevented by ill health, he told Mr. Jones, from serving in the great war. He had been out in Canada and had come back via New York.

Anna Jones was not sympathetic. Mr. Jones over a

glass of champagne told some of his adventures and

discussed Gladys' carelessness.

"A signature left lying about—Samuel Mosenthal's," he said irritably, "and the necklace in a pin-tray—a pin-tray!"

"And he signs like that his private cheques?" Verney

asked a little breathlessly.

Little Jones pulled out a pocket-book. He had been given a great deal of money, he considered, but as they were starting, Mr. Samuel had thrust a small cheque into his hands for tips and so forth if wanted.

Mr. Jones had not wanted it, and had even forgotten it, but he looked at it now. It was the first private

cheque of the brothers which he had seen.

"Yes—Samuel Mosenthal," he said slowly, replacing it in his book. "Just the same; dreadfully dangerous."

"One fellow I don't care for the look of aboard," whispered Verney. "H'ssh—he's close by—Hawtry."

At this, Mr. Jones got up, observed that the vacuouslooking youth was sleeping in a deck-chair near them, and took a walk to air his views. He suspected Hawtry; the man shadowed him, and was obtrusively civil.

"Knowing that I travel for a great firm," said Mr.

Jones, "he may think I carry jewels."

At this moment the youth called Hawtry woke up, yawned, and strolled along the Leviathan's deck.

"Chilly," he said. "Jones, could you give me a

scrap of paper and a pencil?"

Mr. Jones produced a fountain-pen and a letter card. Hawtry wrote down something which he gave to a steward and stayed with them.

He suffered, it appeared, from the loss of a pocketbook, dropped or stolen. His was useless to him. He asked Mr. Jones if he could advise a good make.

"Mine," said little Jones, "is excellent," and he

pulled it out.

"Particularly useful make," said the Yorkshire squire, holding out his hand.

Verney yawned again, turning the pocket-book over.

The great ship throbbed steadily, spurning the sea, but Hawtry lurched, cried out, and Mr. Jones' pocket-book floated in the creamy wash. A little black speck it rose and fell, and slugged more soddenly and fell astern, where it bobbed rakishly.

"With a large quantity of memos, several unprinted films, five pounds and a cheque," shrieked little Jones "Supposing a submarine containing a crook

finds it!"

The most extraordinary part was the behaviour of Verney. He made a dash for the rail, and would have been over in his gust of sympathy had not Hawtry and Mr. Jones clung to him.

"They'd stop for me," he said ill-humouredly.

swim like a fish. You fool, to drop it!"

Hawtry apologised tearfully. He produced a fivepound note. He offered to help to re-write the diary: and as for the cheque -

Little Mr. Jones was distinctly ruffled.

"I call it exceedingly careless," he said huffily. "A perfectly good pocket-book full of valuable contents."

"Might be as lucky he dropped it," said Verney

angrily, "with that cheque in it.

A pang of fear shot through Mr. Jones' heart. Supposing it was camouflage. Then he must be thankful that the book was drowned.

"Really at first," Verney laughed, "I almost thought it was something alive, Jones, and was going to jump. But I should have been all right. Kind of fish I am.

At this moment Gladys came hurrying across the deck,

looking excited.

"Someone's got that letter, Mr. Jones," she said, "opened a box and taken it out. Come down quickly."

And the necklace?"

"Oh, I've got that on," she said, "but there's the signature. I locked the letter up."

Little Jones searched the box and saw the captain. The ship's emperor was less haughty to the little man, for he recalled the emeralds.

"Never forget you shinning—er—running away in pursuit," he said. "Now what's this? I'm to lock up Hawtry? I'm not D.O.R.A. in a peaked cap," said the captain. "Then you'll wireless; the *Glorytania* will be taken for a floating madhouse before we berth."

Mr. Jones sent another message, which ran: "Do be

careful I advise it Jones."

"Sunstroke," said Mr. Samuel savagely, biting the

handle of his pen.

Gladys Hartley was really put out. She had locked away the letter in a little long despatch box and it had been taken out of it; the lock presented no difficulties to an expert.

The Glorytania throbbed her way to England, and little Jones, urged by the Yorkshireman Verney, watched

young Hawtry carefully.

Anna, his wife, wrapped in blissful reminiscences and still more blissful forecasts of how she would impress her friends, said she might as well not have a husband.

"I'll give 'em maple syrup. I've a tin of it," she said, during one of Mr. Jones' brief visits to the second-class, "and call the biscuits crackers, and the chocolates candy. I shall not be at home for tea myself for a fortnight," said Anna Jones. "Oh, here, Archibald, what pip have you got now?—you're not listening."

"Cheque-books," said Mr. Jones absently. "Signa-

tures, my dear."

Land loomed up. They skirted the little green jewel Ireland, emerald by name and opal by nature, an imp of mischief ever dancing in her heart, and drew close to Liverpool.

Mr. Jones hoped that one of his employers would meet the ship. With a show of civility he asked Hawtry if

he would be travelling to London.

Hawtry, yawning, said he didn't know.

"Travel light," he said. "I can spirit off while all you people are collecting baggage. And I—may have reason to hurry, Mr. Jones."

Little Jones said that it was odd for a man who had been so long away to have no trunks, and Hawtry said it was. Gladys Hartley, feeling a little nervous, got ready to land, clasping the curious necklace round her neck and hiding it by a muffler. She hoped that her uncles would not be annoyed at her choice, but she feared the worst. Little Jones thrashed out momentous problems as they glided in. He felt nervous.

Hawtry would rush off and cash his forged cheque. It must be prevented. The little man thought things out; he smiled as he went below and the great ship trembled and slowed into her berth. Liverpool frowned

at them through an autumn blight.

Hawtry's cabin was next to Mr. Jones'. The little man called out suddenly as if in pain, and Hawtry ran in.

"Oh, dear, I've dropped another blank cheque," said Mr. Jones, staring as an anxious angler might to see if a fly is taken. "Mr. Amos's this time."

Mr. Hawtry murmured something about nurses.

"Dropped or taken?" he rasped out, stooping to search.

Mr. Jones ran out and turned the key. He had tipped the steward; his things were up. He rushed on to the deck and scurried off. In the confusion Mr. Hawtry

might shout for half an hour or more.

Verney had gone off, and little Jones looked for him. He left Anna and her luggage to her fate. He waited anxiously for the first train, and drew a breath of relief as it ran out of the station. But at the last moment he saw Hawtry with set jaw tear down the platform and leap into a carriage.

"Dear me! I had better wire the partners and go straight to the bank," thought Mr. Jones. "Mr. Samuel's private account is at Golders. We got in so

early we shall be in London before closing time."

Mr. Jones wrote wires at Chester, one begging Mr. Samuel to come at once to the bank to meet him.

He paid heavy bribes for a taxi at Euston, failed to

get one, so plunged into the Tube, from which he was ejected panting in the Strand and rushed to the bank. It was close to closing time.

The little man still wore his deck shoes, which he had

forgotten to change.

"Manager, immediately," he said. "Mr. Samuel

Mosenthal's-urgent."

A bland gentleman looked up at Mr. Jones, unbent at the mention of Mosenthals' name and then rubbed his

head, as Mr. Jones poured out his story.

"Signature stolen—also cheques—you fear some crook is here with a cheque and forged signature? It's rather muddled," said the manager wearily. "We've just ten minutes; look out from here."

Mr. Jones looked out at the busy crowd paying in and receiving money, at the deft clerks sorting and

counting, the men scrutinising signatures.

Then Jones saw Hawtry, undisguised, saunter in quietly.

"Arrest him," said Mr. Jones, "Quickly, please,

sir.

"Lord bless me, I can't arrest a man for walking into my bank," said the manager petulantly.

To this Mr. Jones replied that ship's captains and bank

managers really encouraged crime.

Hawtry presented a cheque quietly and it was cashed without demur.

The manager hurried forward.

"It's a cheque for fifty of Samuel Mosenthal's, and I could swear to the signature," he said, looking at it helplessly. "It's correct."

"If you let him go," said Mr. Jones, darting forward,

"if you do-"

Banks have their ways. Hawtry seemed in no hurry, but stood counting his notes slowly, and someone touched him.

Manager wished to see him in the office—doubt as to signature. Next moment Hawtry was confronted by Mr. Jones.

"Oh, you," said Hawtry. "You little ass-you make me tired."

"I've got you, anyhow," said Mr. Jones mildly.

"You locked me up at the most important moment. You think I've forged that?" Hawtry drew out a card, tossing it to the manager.

"Anyone can forge cards," said little Mr. Jones, but this——" he looked at the cheque. "How could you know—when it went into the sea?" he said

unevenly. "How did you guess?"

Hawtry was visibly impatient; the clock ticked on and he stood near the door looking down the bank. Paxton the manager was trying to get through to Mosenthals'.

Next moment Hawtry had bounded from the room and rushed down the emptying bank.

"He's gone," shrieked Mr. Jones.

"Large cheque irregularly signed by Mr. Mosenthal," said a clerk; "the bearer his own employee, Archibald Jones; says it's a mistake, but——"

"Hold him-help!" yelled Hawtry. "Help, I say.

Here you, Jones-catch him. He didn't guess.'

Mr. Jones thought he must have nightmare when his double, dishevelled, his coat torn, was hustled into the room.

"I've been after him the whole voyage," said Hawtry, as the handcuffs clicked, and the prisoner snarled impotently. "I was put on to watch the necklace and was on this job on my own. Here he is got up as our great Jones, robber catcher."

Verney's height had mysteriously gone. He was a little man, meek and shifting, and an excellent twin to

Mosenthal's clerk.

"What on earth has Jones done now?" said Amos Mosenthal, walking in. "Two Jones, and one in handcuffs."

Here he sat down and drew devils on a small piece of paper. Hawtry told his part of the story. He had been near enough on deck to hear Jones confide in Verney and heard Verney talk of the signature; then to save the cheque being taken he had pitched the pocket-book

into the sea.

"But dear me," said little Jones huffily, "you surprise me. Colonel Verney asked—that is—the letter was signed Samuel Mosenthal. I looked at the cheque and saw the signature was S. N. Mosenthal, but with the firm's interests at heart I—I——"

"You told a lie," roared Verney, writhing. "You-

turnip."

"Naturally I did," said Mr. Jones. "Naturillemong, French—"

The 'phone rang, and the manager took off the receiver. "A lady," he said, "at your office, Mr. Mosenthal."

Mr. Amos blushed, then went to the 'phone.

"Gladys—hello!—My niece's necklace has gone," he said. "She did not miss it until nearly in London—Yes, Gladys, we're at my bank. Never mind—probably

rubbish." He hung up the receiver.

"Taken when I was locked up," said Hawtry with a groan. "Oh, you Jones—you Jones!" Verney smiled softly. "Oh, I know you've passed it on," yelped the detective, "and that it's broken up by now. When a man fancies he is clever I give things up."

Gladys Hartley rushed into the room. She was

followed by Peter Greer.

"Oh, I'm so sorry," she said. "And has that signature gone wrong, too? I can't think when the necklace went. I—er—was not—I was—occupied."

Peter Greer blushed.

Mr. Jones coughed in a deprecating manner.

"To be accurate, Miss Gladys Hartley has never worn the necklace," he said meekly. "I had a rough imitation made up hurriedly which looked quite real; the turquoises were. The real necklace is here." He pulled a little package out of his pocket, undid the string and laid the curious piece of jewellery on the table.

Mr. Amos Mosenthal picked it up and examined it

carefully.

"You shall have a percentage on this, you Nap—you Jones," he said.

The bank manager wiped his forehead.

"The whole affair is very upsetting," he said wearily. Verney moved his handcuffed wrists and agreed.

"Some day—you—you—sweet-pea—" he said, licking his dry lips, and looking at Mr. Jones.

"I have outwitted one-eyed apaches, Mr. Verney," said Mr. Jones haughtily. "I am not afraid of a mere crook."

The bank manager hurried out of the room, feeling

that liquid refreshment was a necessity.

"And the other affair," said Mr. Samuel, "carried

through as neatly, hey, Jones?"

"Well, no, sir," said Mr. Jones, "not exactly—as I wrote you when the American millionaire butted in I -used my own judgment."

"And I am engaged to Peter," said Gladys. "Yes, I know he has no money, but you have heaps, nunkies."

Both partners looked at the firm's niece eloquently. Mr. Samuel commenced a sentence and Mr. Amos Mosenthal stopped him.

"Nothing like love," he said. "We'll have a double

wedding, Gladys."

"Amos!" roared Mr. Samuel.

"I am going to marry Miss Hanly," said Amos Mosenthal: "she never wants me to talk to her."

Mr. Samuel Mosenthal smoothed his silk hat.

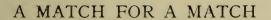
"I think, Amos," he said icily, "that we might now allow Mr. Jones to live in idleness and grow sweet-peas. He—he——" Mr. Samuel choked. "He is too vast for clerk's work," said Mr. Samuel. "He shall have a house with a garden-some way out of London."

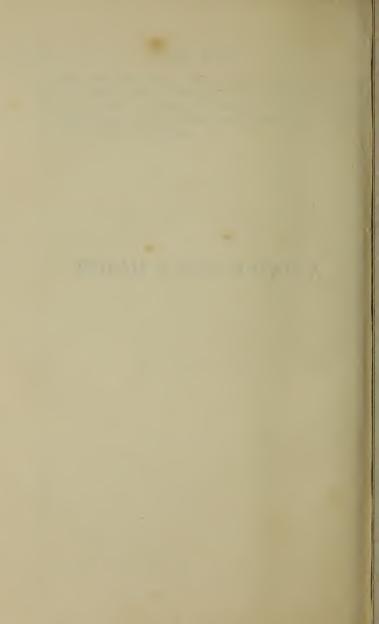
"With a telephone," said Mr. Jones after he had gasped out his thanks, "so that the firm can call me up when they are in difficulties. Good morning, Mr.

Vernev."

"I'm getting him away before he chokes," explained the detective, nodding at Verney.

Little Archibald Jones went to that double wedding, and the bride, Gladys, wore a carnation of his growing. He looks back on many adventures, but he seldom mentions them. "Mere little episodes of duty done for the firm," says Mr. Jones.





## A MATCH FOR A MATCH

Ι

EACE," said Desmond Bryan sourly, "has been responsible for many things."

The quiver of August heat was on the world. A sun of brass hung in limitless blue, with here and there flecks of mutinous little wisps of clouds, a dim hint of thunder in their dullness. The gardens flared with old-fashioned flowers; spikes of scarlet gladioli, unstaked, some falling, some brilliantly erect; white peonies, blue catmint, rioting out on to the grass; poppies, self-grown, delicate as softest silk, and everywhere roses climbing and tangling, their flowers festooned across the dead wood which should have been

Old Peter Doyle poked at the borders twice a year; he had no time for what he called posies. But scraping as a little old rabbit might in the vastness of the garden, he produced giant cabbages and cauliflowers, great pears and plums, and the Ballinamona raspberries were the

fattest in the country.

cut away from them.

"Yes." Desmond kicked at a thistle. "Peace dinners and bad heads, and I don't trust Martin Stoney—never did. There is something behind his ferrety little eyes. And he wants Gloria for himself."

"Yes." A girl raised her head, looking up at the

house. "Yes, Desmond."

Moireen Bryan lay face down on the dry turf, her hands supporting her chin. A small, plain girl with masses of soft hair screwed away tightly, her only real beauty soft grey eyes.

Ballinamona was outlined in the sun's blaze. An imposing massive house with splendid rooms, many of them empty of furniture. The Hardresses of old had built lavishly. A billiard-room made glass-topped excrescence at one side, a ball-room had been built on at another, but the house itself was as a dull jewel set round with brilliants.

No place in Ireland was more beautiful. A lake rippled beyond the neglected rock garden. It was fed by a tributary from the Garnish river, which glided or rippled through the lawn. The park was surrounded by masses of trees, once a complete ring, but now gaps had been hewed in them to give vistas of the mountains looming azure-blue in the heat. To the west a gap showed a patch of bog, wild and desolate, starred with white bog-cotton, gapped by black trenches. At the back of the house stood a ruined castle where the Hardresses had once lived, now a soft mass of clinging ivy with lichened stone peering out.

'There's Gerald." Moireen's soft voice changed. A long-legged fellow came out on the terrace which runs at one side of the house, a girl in white with him. They stood for a minute leaning on the rose-festooned trellis, then began to stroll towards the big beech where

the Bryans sheltered.

"This place is full of ants," said Gerald suddenly; "they are all over you, Moireen, biting your scraps of arms, child."

Moireen sat up, looking fixedly at the two figures. "If only Gerald had a stronger head and this peace

dinner wasn't coming off at Shannid," grunted Desmond.

"I'm afraid."

There was everything to make life wonderful at Ballinamona save a sufficient income to keep it up on. Gerald's forefathers had overhoused themselves even on their large rent-roll; the land court had pinched here and sliced there, wages had gone up and rents down until Gerald farmed not for amusement but in a grim struggle to live; he now bred and sold horses for the same purpose. Four years in France had ended profits in farming, everything had gone wrong in his absence, and during his leave he had complicated matters by romance. The Hagans, rich Americans of Irish extraction, had bought Castle Bellew, and come to live in the county. Gloria Hagan was tall and fair, with hard, bright blue eyes and wonderful golden hair, and Gerald adored her.

But Poppa Hagan, hard-bitten and worldly wise, desired greater things for his daughter. He possessed the transatlantic admiration for titles, and the amount of money which he settled upon Gloria was to be deter-

mined not by her needs but by her successes.

Yet Gloria was obstinate and in love, and Ballinamona was very beautiful. Gerald knew that he had a chance. Inset, as the illustrations of theatrical stars put it, was Martin Stoney, next heir to the Glendalough title, unless his old uncle married again, and Gloria's constant admirer when Gerald was away. Martin had been very busy during the years of war, but he had not gone to fight.

A nasal voice remarked that it was some summer, and James P. Hagan, elderly and brick-coloured, came

from the shaded walk leading to the garden.

He dropped his lean form on to an old bench built

round the tree, and studied the house.

"Done up, yew couldn't beat it," he said. "And with conservatories in the garden and carpet-bedding, and that old idiot Peter pensioned, you couldn't beat the garden either."

Old Peter had come padding behind the millionaire, bringing raspberries for tea. A great cabbage leaf piled

up with golden and crimson fruit.

"Told me he didn't hold with set posies," growled Mr. Hagan. "That flowers should be flowers and not

quare patterns."

"Let ye have a care of that bench," said Peter, putting his raspberries on a rustic table. "It is not mended this tin year," he added, "an' very delicate in parts."

James Hagan was lean, but heavily made. He moved,

and the dosed wood crumbled, letting him down between the tree-trunk and the still sound outer ring of the seat,

where he got firmly wedged.

"I counselled Masther Gerald a year ago to shlap in new bits of trees," said Peter dispassionately. "Aisy, sir, there's a wopsies' nesht below the roots; let ye kape quiet."

At this speech, and the inarticulate roar which came from the struggling man, Gerald put his handkerchief into his mouth, and became as helpless as the captured American.

A stream of outraged wasps rushed forth singing in nasty cadence. One came straight at Desmond and stung

his nose, and James Hagan shrieked for help.

"Pull me out. Kick that front rung away. God, they're all round me! I shall be stung to death, Bryan!"

"I am exceedingly badly stung myself," said Desmond

huffily, patting his nose.

"If he was sthout he would be annear a plecty fit," said Peter, still gazing calmly. "If ye thrun plenty parrafine ile on the wopsies, Misther Desmond, it is good, they says. An' set light to it. Ye could pull him out then with plenty shmoke arround."

Moireen recovered herself and ran into the cloud of annoyed wasps. Catching the old man's hands, she

pulled hard just as Gerald came to the tree.

Gloria shrieked "Poppa" as she ran away. The outer rail gave, and James Hagan, striking out in the blind way mankind does when surrounded by wasps, rushed to a box-bush and took cover.

"He will cool there," said Peter, stumping off.
Peter's malignant eye told that he had heard Hagan's

remark about old idiots.

When the wasps went home and Mr. Hagan was persuaded to come to another tree, his remarks were pungent.

"Not mending seats, things one sat on. Wasp nests! when cyanide was to be procured!" James Hagan was ruffled.

"The only man who suffered being me," said Desmond,

nursing his nose. "How many noses have I got, Moireen?"

Moireen counselled the blue-bag, and her cousin went to get it. Gerald apologised incoherently.

"Not so much lack of timber and nails as forgetfulness,"

he said. "Peter did tell me, or I told Peter."

Mr. Hagan said "Ireland!" in tones as bitter as the song of the wasps. He drank the tea which Lyons, the old butler, brought out, and enlarged on carelessness.

"But with money and work"—he emphasised work

-" the place could be made charming."

Gerald's face lost its worried look, and took an expectantly nervous expression. "Here's Martin," he muttered.

"But of course you so stupidly let all your farm go,"

Hagan grunted crossly. "No place for cattle."

"Martin bought the low meadows," said Gerald, my fattening land. Come and see the horses."

Martin Stoney had heard Hagan's remark, his eyeslighting quickly.

They strolled to the vast old yard, half of it crumbling to decay. But here again one could see that its size pleased Hagan.

"With electric light," he said, "and water turned on

-a fine yard. And with proper grooms."

"Patsy is Peter's grandson," said Gerald. Voices

rose outside-Peter's and another.

"I counselled him, Patsy, an' he wouldn't be said be me. Into the wopsies' nesht he wedged himself, nice and aisy, with a face so bitther on him, I declare to God the craythurs were afeared, an pasht him to sthing Mister Desmond."

"Cripes!" said Patsy, seeing his master.

Mr. Hagan's bricky complexion deepened to scarlet.

He looked furiously at the old archway.

Gerald had several horses getting ready for the horse show. He showed them to Gloria, who admired them all.

"Gloria." Gerald had taken her into a dark old

loose-box to look at a shelly-brown mare. "Gloria, I wonder if your father . . ." Gloria sighed quickly. "If . . . we . . . and afterwards he'd forgive us," whispered Gerald.

I could never do that," said Gloria quickly. " Never, Gerald."

Gerald wished that for a moment the girl had not reminded him of her father. Her face had hardened

and grown shrewd. He sighed, too.

"If I had more land . . . I really believe," he mut-"Yes, Martin, Napoleon is in that stable. Mind tered. him."

This, as a chestnut head came over a half-door, teeth

bared, and with a screeching whinney of wrath.

"Nap," said Gerald. "Nap, old boy."

The chestnut head promptly rubbed itself against his arm. Gerald opened the door, calling to Patsy for a bridle. Napoleon was a great raking chestnut, thoroughbred, and, until Gerald got him, hopelessly vicious. He ran away; when raced, he stood still and kicked. But Gerald had bought him as a three-year-old, and managed to ride the horse. In the hunting field, if another horse jumped too close to him, the big chestnut was given to stopping and kicking. He was a thoroughly unpleasant ride at first, but a brilliant hunter. Over eight now, he had idled for four years, carrying his master during his brief spells of leave.

"He could win the National, if he'd try," said Gerald, patting the lean head. Napoleon bit playfully, and

Moireen walked up to the horse.

"Moireen," warned Gerald quickly. But Napoleon snapped again in friendly fashion, and the girl patted him.

"I got him fit last autumn," she said quietly.

"You rode this horse! You! Patsy let you?"
"Oh, he didn't let me, but I made him!" said Moireen. " Eh, Nap?"

"The masther'll flay the bones from me body, Miss

Moireen," said Patsy outside.

"Myself"—Martin kept warily clear of the chestnut's heels—"I don't believe he is so fast. Wild Rose, my mare, would beat him over four miles, Gerald."

"We'll have a match," snapped Gerald. "Eh, Nap? And send out someone to tell us where Wild Rose is when

I get home."

Martin's eyelids snapped. He said, "Yes, let's"—softly. "Let's. With a good wager on, if you'd risk a good one."

Gloria looked at Martin and frowned. Moireen turned away from the chestnut and stared at him thoughtfully.

"What's so odd in a match?" said Martin smoothly.
Mr. Hagan, still ruffled, stalked through the yards suggesting modern improvements.

"When I breed a good yearling," said Gerald, "I'll

do things, sir."

"And dismiss those incompetent idiots," barked the

millionaire. "That would be a necessity."

James Hagan was pressed to go to Martin's dinner, but declined. His digestion, he explained, was very precious to him. He knew what a bachelor peace dinner would be.

"Drive over to us afterwards and play bridge," sug-

gested Gloria.

Martin Stoney snapped his eyelids again, his crafty eyes gleaming curiously. He looked at Ballinamona, and the long meadows seen golden green through a gap in the trees, and he smiled.

"Gerald." Little Moireen came up to Gerald. "Be a little careful to-morrow. Martin is plotting something."

Gerald sat, rather bored through an over-elaborate dinner. There were too many olives and anchovies, and he did not care for champagne. Martin had a bowl of cold punch, which he ladled out himself at the side table. They began to argue about their horses. Gerald sipped; they all drank the punch. He wondered why his tasted so strong.

Napoleon would beat the mare anywhere. Napoleon

-if he would go.

Martin got him a second tumbler of punch to sip, and then another. Napoleon might be as good as Gerald

thought him.

Through a mist he heard Martin taunting. A tenner a-side, or would Gerald risk a big thing? Wild Rose was a good mare. Afraid! Who was afraid? Gerald's head swam.

"If you're so sure—Ballinamona against the Meadow Farm—five thousand forfeit if not run before six months. But if Gerald funked it . . ." Of course, it was a wedding present of the Farm.

Then came pens and paper.

Martin wrote carefully, and Gerald's head grew worse. Major Hardress's chestnut gelding Napoleon, Mr. Stone's brown mare Wild Rose, four miles across a country to be chosen. Owners up. Martin scratched out the words. He wanted someone else to ride for him, and no one but Gerald could mount Napoleon.

"Des, come and witness," called Gerald unsteadily. "Say, my head's bad. This goo' fellow Martin's helpin'

me

"Just witness this," said Martin. "We're going

to gallop our cracks against each other."

Desmond wrote unwillingly, his face set in suspicion. Gerald did not allay his suspicions by making inane remarks concerning good fellows who were giving him farms, and that he was not afraid.

"He made me do it," said Martin.

Desmond, looking grave, got Gerald to his car and drove him home.

## II

Mr. James P. Hagan stood on the badly-gravelled sweep, appraising the imposing masonry of Ballinamona, while in a large bedroom the owner raved of his madness,

and was listened to sympathetically by Desmond, who nursed an enlarged nose and spoke as one affected by a bad cold in the head.

"Mad! Mad! Mad!" groaned Gerald. Here he thumped a pillow. "He did it all on purpose, Des."

"You bed," snuffled Desmond. "Rodden chap, always. Hang that wopse."

"I shan't dare to take Nap to Dublin. I shall be in a fever of anxiety."

"Led you off," suggested Desmond.
"He won't," said Gerald. "He'll make out he's

doing me a favour. He . . . .

"Mr. Hagan is waitin' on ye below, Major," said Lyons, coming in. "So I brought a bottle of sody wather to sthraighten your honour, Masther Gerald."

Lyons spoke with a blend of love, blame and sorrow,

dominated by love.

"He is takin' a kind of measure around the house,"

said the old man, "an' mutterin'."

Gerald drank the soda-water quickly. Without Ballinamona he knew that his chances were nil. His big place was worth endowing. He was too proud to plead with crafty Martin; it would not further his cause to say that he was hopelessly drunk.

"That punch was doped," he muttered.

"He put champagne instead of water or milk into yours, probably," snuffled Desmond. "Keep quiet about it."

But it was not kept quiet. Martin whispered it, Desmond groaned over it. Martin came laughing, pointing to the rich strip of pasture land.

"My wedding-present, old chap," he said. And

Gerald gritted his teeth.

Napoleon was a smasher, but smashers fail. Gerald went up to the Horse Show in low spirits, leaving "Were you mad," she said, "to wager our only chance?" Napoleon behind. Gloria greeted him coolly there.

"Sure to win," said Gerald. "Nap can lose that

mare. Oh, Gloria, can't you understand that I was mad!

Miss Hagan replied that she understood perfectly. She was expensively dressed, and looked lovely, while Moireen with a sick heart crept about in almost shabby white, and tried to persuade men to buy Gerald's brown

The Hagans had taken a house in Dublin for the week, and Martin Stoney's uncle, a hale man of sixty-five, was

one of their guests.

Martin throughout was the genial friend, confident of defeat. But he knew that Wild Rose was something more than smart, and he knew Naopleon's temper and his tricks.

When Gerald went back to Ballinamona he grew nervous. Everything depended on one horse. Napoleon might get a cough, go lame, get killed. For a time he coddled the big chestnut, then he grew reckless. His old merry smile came back, and he determined to trust to his luck.

Old James Hagan was rather pleased. Gerald seemed sure of his horse, the big farm would make a difference to Ballinamona. But Gloria, with her house full of new friends, was still angry.
"I must win," Gerald told her; "and then—why,

it will be all right."

"You had no right to jeopardise our chance," she repeated.

Gerald's eyes were very wistful, despite his brave

smile, as he talked to Moireen one gusty October day.

The match was fixed for a late day in November.

So much—so much depended on it—life itself, it seemed

to him.

Little Moireen patted Napoleon, her eyes wistful as Gerald's. She had loved Ballinamona's master for years, and before the war people had talked of the match. Then Gloria, blue-eyed, lovely, had swept Gerald off his feet. And now Moireen wanted him to be happy. Her own hurt hidden, she thought only of his.

"That is a wayzal, that Martin Stoney," said Patsy. 'He has Donovan down odd days ridin' that mare her gallops an' that same Donovan is worse than wayzals; he is a fox. There is no foul ridin' he isn't up to."

"Martin not riding himself?" Gerald turned white. Matt Donovan knew every trick of his trade. He had

been up many times.

The opening meet came with soft winds and pearly lights, grey clouds travelling fast overhead, Gerald rode Napoleon. If anything was to happen it must happen, and the horse was at its best when regularly hunted.

But bad fortune, lurking, waited at the meet. They found at Caherglyn Gorse, and ran across the road into a deep country fenced by high banks. Gerald pulled out left of hounds, Napoleon hated a crowd. The big horse strode resolutely through the deep going. He fenced like a cat. He fretted at checks, scent was catchy, but his temper was improving with age. There was a long check on the brow of the hill, close to a road. Hounds spoke to it at last, and Gerald rode fast at a high bushed-up gap. He heard the ominous ping as Napoleon rose—felt the flounder and dropped in soft blackness. As he fell Gerald's head struck a stone, and his wrist bone snapped.

Moireen caught the big chestnut; she stood white and dry-eyed as Gerald was carried to a car and driven home. Then she began to shift the saddles. She rode

astride.

"He won't lead. I'll ride him," she said.

When Gerald came back to consciousness his first thought was of his race. Would Napoleon be fit to ride? There was a time limit. He remembered some clause. "The horse is being kept fit, Gerald; don't worry. It's time enough," someone said soothingly. But they did not tell him that he had jarred his spine, and would not ride for many months.

Outside in the driving smother of mist Moireen was galloping Napoleon. She had come over every day,

and the great chestnut let her mount him quietly.

Martin Stoney showed his mind to Desmond.

"A bet's a bet. Gerald drove me into it. If I had got knocked out he would have taken the farm. Someone must ride the horse for him, that's all, and if I win I'll make it easy; but I don't believe in that horse. What's happening to him now?"

"He is being exercised," said Desmond coldly.
A month passes quickly. Gerald was carried downstairs and saw Moireen. He was to keep quiet. They had found someone who could manage the chestnut. Who? . . . he must keep quiet.

"A Bryan, a cousin of Desmond's," said Moireen.

"Donovan is up on the mare."

She stood pale and quiet. Napoleon was the smasher Gerald thought him, and he should have his chance.

"Martin will take the forfeit, five thousand. Where could I find five thousand, Moireen?" he said. "Who rides? M. Bryan, you say—a cousin of Desmond's. He'll mess my poor horse about."

Moireen smiled. She said the rider would turn up on the day of the race, and Desmond was equally uncom-

municative.

The day of the match was one of purple distances, with gleams of sun. Gerald, fretting sorely, was driven to Cara Hill, the spot fixed on. He did not know as yet why his legs dragged when he tried to stand.

The party from Castle Cara came in heavy limousines. Among them Martin's uncle, Lord Glendalough, a wiry

man of sixty-three.

"Looks like business," Desmond said reluctantly.

" Making up to the uncle."

The course was a twisting one; two miles out to Ballinhanly schoolhouse, round that, and back over

holding fields below the hill.

Moireen was not pale to-day. People asked who was riding the big rogue. She had kept her secret. She was riding for Gerald. He would never be so mad again, and happiness must come to him.

"Who is riding, Des? Do tell me." Gerald cursed

his helplessness. "Lord, I see the horse! I knew how it would be. Oh, look there!"

Moireen looked small and plain as she threw off her coat, Donovan whistling loudly when he saw his rival.

"God save us! Are you mad?" he said mildly. "And that great gibawn of a horse. Don't do it, Miss Bryan."

Nap was in a bad temper, hating the crowd. He lashed out, he bit savagely if anyone came near him; he sweated

as he walked.

"Now then!" Moireen dodged clear of the ready heels. She took the horse by his bridle and pulled him to a bank. He reared straight almost as she landed in the saddle; he plunged, his great chestnut body rising clear of the crowd, and it was then Gerald saw him.

But the girl sat like a rock. She dropped the reins for a second, merely patting the strong wet neck.

Napoleon walked on calmly.

"Moireen," said Gerald. "Going to ride? It's

madness! Stop her!"

A small plain face was turned towards him; he caught a look which no woman had ever given him in the deep grey eyes; then Moireen waved her hand and cantered up to the car.

"Here is that Bryan," she said gaily, "Desmond's cousin. He'll win for me, Gerry," she whispered, "for

you both."

Moireen's voice faltered a little as she looked up at

the Hagan's cars-and Gloria.

Mr. Hagan now declared the whole thing to be absurd,

and Gerald an idiot of price.

"Kind of thing a fellow who doesn't use cyanide for his wasps would do," he snapped. "He'll lose the match, and I hope someone else will mend the seats."

Wild Rose looked a pony beside Napoleon's sixteenthree. But she was a powerful mare and trained to the

hour.

"Don't ride at me and I'll make it easy for you," said Donovan to Moireen. "I can blind you at the game."

"I'll ride away from you," she boasted lightly, though

her heart was thumping.

The flag dropped. Napoleon plunged at the light touch of heels on his side, then cantered off lazily. Moireen put him at the first bank. Wild Rose came with a rush beside him. From the commencement Donovan seemed to know the big horse's failing. He would wait and then sprint past him just at the fence, or scurry along and pull back, and Napoleon, vexed, would not gallop. Twice he threw up his head and stopped, but Moireen only patted him, and he caught the mare again easily. She, too, was upset by her jockey's tactics.

As they rounded the chapel Napoleon began to take hold of his bits and stride along. Moireen had never ridden a race; she did not know how to make use of her horse, but rather nursed him through the deep going. Matt Donovan cursed softly under his breath. Wild Rose was a stayer, but he knew she could not gallop with the great chestnut, so it was time to do something. They were coming down at a nasty corner, and he set the mare going furiously. Moireen was on his left; as he came on to the fence the mare swerved across, Donovan taking his whip up and slashing at her as if she were refusing. Before he could pull back the whip caught Napoleon twice on the head.

With a snort of sheer rage he stopped, rearing up savagely, slipped into the ditch and fell; the mare slipped out over the corner and Donovan took every ounce out of her as he turned. He would never be caught

now.

Moireen was off on the bank and up again in a second, and at the fence. She sobbed as she saw the mare jump a field away. But she shook her horse up at last. His great stride ate the ground, the wind whistled by her face, she could see the strong shoulders cut the air, feel the great muscles ripple as he strode out. A lightning kick at a bank, a mighty fly over water, another bank cleared, a low stone wall, and the run in.

Thunder of the chestnut straining every nerve, with

the girl just holding him together and urging him with her knees, nearer, nearer still to the man in front. A hoarse roaring of voices from the hill close up at the wall.

Donovan turned, cursing. His mare was stone cold; he knew it. He took his whip again, flourishing it as he saw the white-blazed nose rushing up behind him. But Moireen steered wide; she came to quarter, to girth, the mad glory of racing going as wine to her brain-to shoulder, for a second gallant little Wild Rose made an effort under the whip. Nose and nose for a brief space, then the big head clear. Shouts and screams and frantic hurrahs; clear above the din old Peter's voice.

"She has the wayzul bate! Great, great!"

The white post flitted; Moireen pulled up trembling, then looked across the sea of faces to one in a car-Gerald's. Then she rode in.

Catch-weights over twelve stone had meant two stone of lead. She trembled until they weighed her. Martin Stoney was still busy using language to his jockey.

"To be bested by a girl! Not to hit the horse sooner from behind or somewhere."

"She came like a whirlwind; and I declare to God I am pleased she beat me—the brave little thing!" said Donovan sourly. "Don't blackguard me, or I'll say what you offered me to do a dirty trick."

"How did he foul you at the corner?"—Desmond was putting on Moireen's coat. "Slipped in front and took his whip out, did he? He had his orders," slid out Desmond. "But you've done it, Moireen."

Brief glory of triumph !- a plain little girl, a heroine, and then what? As chill falls quickly after overheating, Moireen Bryan realised that her score would be wiped out when Gerald's engagement was announced.

"Glory to ye, miss! He bate the wayzul," said old eter. "Tin shillin' I won, miss, thanks to God an' your honour. They laid heavy agin Napoleon an' a gerril above on him."

"I'd do more for Mr. Gerald," said Moireen.

Peter said darkly there were others that would not,

and stumped off.

Napoleon, his ears back, was led to the motor, and Gloria and Lord Glendalough went across. Martin following them, his face furrowed by anger, his voice over-genial.

"It was only a joke; I'd never have held him to it," he explained. "I'd never have let it go to this theatrical

affair of Moireen riding a race."

Gerald patted Napoleon tenderly.

"Good joke!" he said drily. "Well, I don't hold you to your part of it, Martin. Winning is glory enough."

Miss Hagan blinked sharply; her father gasped.

"S'pose it's for Martin's sake she's got his uncle down," said Desmond to Moireen. "Child, you're shivering. Hot coffee immediately; and Gerald wants

me. Come after me."

But little Moireen slipped to her pony-trap and drove away alone. The November day was dulling to its long night, the soft lights fading, and a drizzle of mist commencing. Moireen pulled up at the brow of the hill to look back. People were still lunching, but hoods were being put up. She saw Desmond get into Gerald's car.

"They are going back to Castle Cara," she said; but

the car took the road to Ballinamona.

November slipped to December, January's chill hands gripped the world; the match was forgotten, and no fresh news stirred the little Irish county. The Hagans' house was always full of people, and Gerald grew better slowly. He had quite refused to take the farm. Moireen often rode Napoleon to hounds, the great brute going quietly for her. She saw Gerald on hunting evenings, so as to tell him of the day, but she winced when he thanked her for winning his match.

Moireen grew thinner during that winter, her grey

eyes looked too big for her small face.

March gave out his blustering promise of spring.

Hot sun and chill winds parched the earth, and the last meet was over.

Moireen rode Napoleon home along dusty roads to find Gerald sitting out in a sheltered corner. Daffodils waved golden and cream, scarlet anemones slashed the green, and the promise of spring was softly given in the shelter of the garden wall. Gerald could walk now slowly.

"There was no scent, and vixens in two coverts. I came home." Moireen looked very tired. "You look—Gerald, is it all right at last—settled? I saw the

Hagans' car driving away."

"Yes, it is settled up," he said dully. "Quite,

little Moireen."

"I am so glad, Gerald! The place—will—be lovely." Her voice came in jerks. "Yet, somehow, I like it as it is, with the little crumbles I've always known, the seats one cannot trust. You remember the wopses' nests?"

Gerald laughed.

"And old Hagan doubled up, and Peter."

A touzled grey head rose from the cabbages.

"He said I was an ijit," said Peter, in dignified tones;

"so the sorra a pull I gave him out."

Peter disappeared again; he was grubbing up weeds. "And"—Gerald laughed again—"yes, Gloria is going to marry old Glendalough. She came to tell me herself to-day. He has three places, and money in oil shares, Moireen."

"Gerald!" Moireen's voice sounded scared.

"So you didn't do—well, what you thought you'd do when you risked your life on Nap? And—I don't believe I should like conservatories and hot baths for the horses, and——"

"Childther's nonsense!" came faintly from the

cabbages.

"I--" Moireen stopped.

"You come here to me. I can only crawl, and don't cry," said Gerald firmly. "Moireen, when I saw you

go out that day something fell from my eyes. I saw the real Moireen. So if she'll take me—you rode a match to make a match, after all."

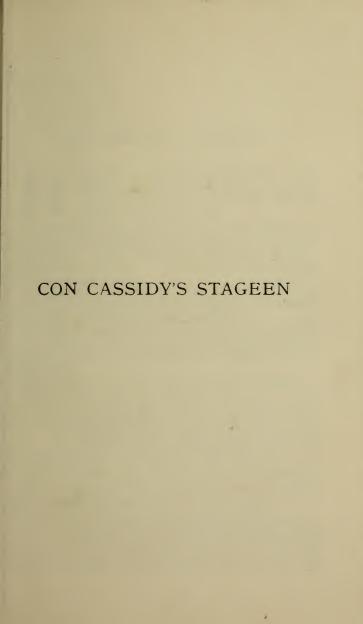
Moireen could recall now the bitter-sweet of her win.

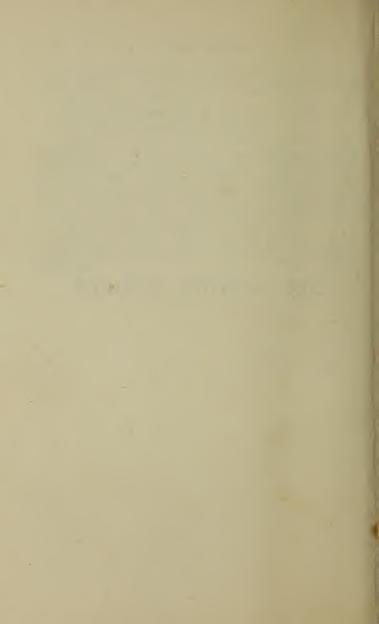
Peter stood up among the cabbages.

"Praises be to the Hivins above!" he said, quite unashamed of having listened, "that Masther Sthoney with all his plots upsot in the ind. Katie Hanratty, me great niece, toult me he had a special tumbler of sthrong drink ready for the masther. She saw him, an' she's bringin' coffee. Ould Peter'll go on growin' raspberries now. I wish ye joy, the pair of ye!"

But-" gasped Moireen.

"That's all right. Peter accepted for you. Help me in, please," said Gerald. "Peter's eyes are too sharp out here."





## CON CASSIDY'S STAGEEN

AVEN'T ye got the ould stageen? "said Purcell, in dissatisfied accents. "I looked to ye for four or five at the least, Con, an' only two ye have for me."

Con Cassidy, lean, hard-bitten, of uncertain age, limped across the yard with a dejected bay horse trailing in his wake. "What great hurry have ye for them? he said, in his slow way. "Is it war horses ye're buying, Mr. Purcell, already?"

Andrew Purcell, an elderly man, tanned to leathery grey, with a tinge of deep whisker edging his obstinate-

looking jawbone, shrugged his shoulders.

He had an order for some surely, an' he was hard pressed with the small price the Government was allow'n' -hard pressed-so he wanted all he could, an' they raysonable.

Con Cassidy rubbed his mop of hair thoughtfully. "There's the bay at twinty-five," he said; "bein" fresh off grass with his hind shoes off ye wouldn't notice the way he wipes his ankles; he'd be fifty-five but for that. An' the black mare, a good useful sort she is; an' the horse I will not sell, for I musht have one to carry me to the hounds; an' that is all, Mr. Purcell."

Andrew Purcell opened the door of a foul-smelling stable. Here, poised on a heap of manure stood a fairly good-looking bay horse, elderly, but showing no great

signs of work. A fine-looking charger, in fact.

Dan Purcell was striving every nerve to make a fortune. Fate had ordained that one of the buyers at Ballymacmere should be a young and unwise officer, who, in his zeal, bought in feverish haste and gave top prices. Here was chance to dash round the country before wiser men came into it and bought up everything. He had got a commission for as many horses as he could find.

"I'll buy this one," said Purcell briskly.

But Con Cassidy had two brothers in the Army. He shook his head.

"Sthaggers," he said briefly—"sthaggers. I am toult ye have but to howld a beefsteak up to the sun beyond there an' 'twill cook; when he got the hate on his head down he'd come. I works him in the early mornin's an' at nights, an' he'll do in winther, but not now, even in the car."

Mr. Purcell suggested that with the noise of the cannonading the horse might probably be too frightened to get staggers. Cassidy shut the door carelessly but

with finality.

He was to bring in the horses next morning to Purcell's

yard, or they might be sent for.

The stageen took advantage of the door being closed but not latched to rush into the yard. He trotted across with good free action, head and tail up.

Purcell grunted to himself; he looked thoughtful. Presently Cassidy strolled up the village; he returned to saddle the staggerer and ride out to see a cousin of his

who lived near the gorse cover of Rahea.

Autumn peace lay on the world. It was impossible to realise that civilised men were preparing to kill each other ruthlessly to satisfy a crazy despot's love of Power. The War Lord had built, at a huge price, a great engine, and to show the reason for its cost he must use it. Its wheels would be oiled with blood, its radiator refilled with women's tears, but its use would be proved.

Con Cassidy did not get as far as thinking this out. What he said to himself was: "It is the devil's own nonsense an' a crool pity, with the country so fine and prosperous, an' Marty anear to his discharge." But he

sighed. Marty was a pet brother.

Davey, the cousin, was out on the lonely little streak of road and greatly excited.

"There isn't an ould baste in the counthry that Purcell isn't buyin' up, an' Maher helpin' him," he said. He was around up to Ballingyle and back to Knockamurry. Me own ould grey is gone an' he eighteen, but there's work in him. An' Conner's mare, an' she stone blind—God save us!—and Cloghessy's two old cobs, one is hurted in the back; an' that bay he has that is parrot-mouthed an' cannot ate rightly, an' Neil's pony mare that is a heaver. If there's war in it," said Con's cousin, "they need not wait for the Germans to kill them that has some of them craythurs betune their knees."

As Con rode back again to the pretty village which he lived in, he thought again that it was a poor game, an' that Kaysir a upsthart of a king. Riding in the warm dusk past Gowla woods he saw Mikky Maher, a neighbour, on the road.

"Good evenin' kindly," said Con Cassidy.

Mikky Maher returned greeting absently; he seemed put out. "The spotty horse is gone on me," he said, "an' all me tin acres out, Con; if the river rises I am done out. Ye have no use for that one, sell him to me. Sure I knows his complaint, but meself an' Michael 'd do the carting through the nights when 'tis cool, an' I'll give ye a tin-pound note for him."

This was far more than Con had paid. He ruminated. At any minute the staggerer might become worse and

completely useless.

"Î will take twelve," he said slowly, and to his astonishment Mikky Maher agreed without demur. Con walked home with saddle and bridle on his arm.

Next day the matter of buying was taken over in earnest. Men who were out—not to make profit by risking men's lives, but to pay fair prices for useful horses—took it up; the flow of the maimed, the halt and the blind was checked. Con got a job to "carry in," so he termed it, two horses to the Barracks.

Here his eyes were greeted by the sight of "misfortunes," as he called them, standing about. And among

the good ones his own old staggerer, looking handsome

and fit.

"That was a dirthy thrick," said Con, quietly. For a moment he looked at the remount officer, then he thought of the scandal, and, being Irish, he held his tongue. But he enlarged on it to his cousin next day, and he asked a friend of his how much the horse had fetched. He learnt that his own two had been resold for forty apiece, but that the bay horse had fetched sixty.

"Purcell is making a fortune," said his informant.

"Whatever chanse ye'd have to git away if ye had the convayneance undther ye," said Con, "what chanse 'd ye have with one of them misfortunes, and ye thryin' to gallop off?"

Con Cassidy imagined the war to be a perpetual fox-

chase, with the quickest man the safest.

He delivered his horses, gazed contemptuously at the "misfortunes," and sorrowfully at the staggerer, which went by the name of "Shaky," and he met Mr. Dan Purcell at the gate. That worthy was looking greyer than usual; he held a crumpled letter in his hand.

"There's my Danny, 'listed in the cavalry,' he roared out. "An' having been a trooper in the Irish Horse, he says he'll get out with the first lot. An' I makin'

money for him here."

He was talking half to himself. The one soft spot in Dan Purcell's flinty old heart was Danny, the somewhat over-gentlemanly son, who rode perfectly and only wanted money to "hold his own with the best," his father said. Money. It had poured in for three golden days. There was enough now to buy the farm next to their own, to mend up the stables, or to put in a thoroughbred mare or two. Money to make a start, coined by risking the lives of men. Young Danny should be a gentleman.

"Some money is quarely come by," said Con Cassidy in his slow voice, and he looked back at the distant silhouette of the staggerer.

He guessed now. Purcell had sent Mikky Maher to buy the horse, giving him a commission.

Con went out by the train. He thought slowly and

forgave at the same rate.

"Ways 'll come," said Con, as he slouched home, where he met Maher rushing frantically to the post office, because Martin, his only son, had disappeared, and left a letter to say he would 'list. "With him all I have an' the hay to be got in, an' scarce a sowl to lend me a hand but them I'll hire," wailed Maher, "an' herself at home with her apern over her head an' she bawlin' that the bye is dead already, that thim Germans can skhim through the air as well as over the land and kill ye above an' below. She saw it on the *Indepindent*."

"Ye worked him hard," said Con, laconically. "An"

ye were choosin' a wife for him."

"A fine stheady gurrl, with a fortin' of her own," cried Maher. "A casht in her eye? Who'd be noticin' eyes afther a year, an' that she can see to make tay and fry mate? Yerself an' ye're nonsense, Con!"

"I seen the staggerer inside," said Con stolidly. "Himself an' a few others ye an' Purcell got through. Ye were too clever for me, Mikky, that time, but ye

might be sorry yit."

When the weeding out began complaint was made that an over-allowance of incapables came from Bally-macmere. But the blind and the very infirm only cost the Government money; they did not go out to cost men their lives.

The frauds, after a time, reached their shipping port, were packed tightly on troop ships to go to France. The stageen, smart and active-looking, was welcomed by the King's Own Thunderers—hussars with a reputa-

tion which they were keeping up.

Ireland read the papers and wondered. Peaceful as she garnered her harvest, out on the borders of Belgium there was Death's harvest. Men whose mothers prayed for them lay stark by the unreaped corn. Horses with their legs pointed up stiffly; the thunder of guns

and whine of shells, and the taste of gunpowder and the smell of blood in men's mouths and nostrils. Flickers of blue smoke from burning farms creeping up across the sunlit land.

Three to one, but no one flinched. War was a medley of masses of forms pouring on, falling, replaced by others, climbing over their own dead. A machine hurling itself against the thin line of defence, to fall back

shattered, beaten, but at a cost. . . .

It will be many years before England can think without a thrill of the defence made by her little army on the Belgian frontier. Smash England at all costs were the orders, and guns played on the English; the flower of the German Army lost petals in that bloody assault, the sky was red with the flame of burning villages, of little Belgian homes razed by raging brutes.

The Despot who aspired to be Lord of the World before he left it, was answerable for the cries of terrified women, for the murder of old men, for worse. . . .

"Pay 'em out yet, the blighters! Oh, the rotten blighters!... women in front of their advance!"—a gasping Tommy sets his teeth. "We'll roast a few of them before they gets to where they'll get it for nothin'. I tell ye they'll be sorry yet that they met the Ballymores."

Mike Maher the younger had got out over soon. A year or two in the Militia had made him knowledgeable.

The King's Own Thunderers waited in the burning heat ready to charge. It had been whispered to them that they would be wanted. New horses had replaced their dead ones. Young Dan Purcell, black with dust, full of enthusiasm, glanced pleasantly at the active-looking horse assigned to him.

"I'd seem to know that one," said Mike Maher, looking at the horse. "It might be from Ballymacmere

he is likely."

"A good sort, I'd say," said young Purcell. 'My father bought a lot an' he knows one, Mike, I tell you; but I don't call this horse to mind."

The cavalry moved off. Mike whistled softly. There was a lull, followed by a new storm of shell and pound of guns, and then a cry that a battery of guns were in danger. Dashing across on them were a troop of cavalry, straight on the exhausted men who were isolated on a little hill.

"Come on the Ballymores! Save the guns!"

Out into the inferno a handful of gallant Irishmen fixed bayonets to meet the rush. The impact of maddened horses rearing as they touched the steel, the slash of sword and crack of revolver. Of the little band every man down, but the English cavalry came thundering through the brushwood and the guns were saved. Limbered up and moved back to security.

Then out among the fallen one man stirred and sat

up, rubbing his head.

"Father Pat can have done with his preachin'. I know all about it now," said Mike Maher weakly. "An' God save us, here's Purcell!" Dan Purcell had ridden out too far; the bay pulled so that before he could turn a swarm of Uhlans was at his heels. But he had a start and he saw on the way Mikky Maher sitting up. "Come on, Mikky," he roared, bending down. "Come on, fall over his back anyway. We have time enough."

Mikky dived up somehow with a grunt. The sun was shining down a fiery glory of heat. And . . . its rays were beating on the head of Dan Purcell's horse. It

stopped short, shook its head wildly.

"Go on! Get on, ye brute!" Dan shrieked, as he kicked.

"I said I knew him. It's Con Cassidy's ould sthaggerer, an' he has the fit of it got," wailed Mike grimly.

From side to side old Shaky moved his head; in a

moment he would be down. It was his last fit.

The swarm was over-close. A brave young Irishman turned to meet the enemy, shots cracked from the trenches, the sun's rays caught the glint of steel and what was red dimming it....

The old stageen had done his work.

Grey-faced, a man who seemed to have lost height and breadth, Dan Purcell drove to the Mahers' door. Someone sat there in a chair with a blanket over his knees, someone who would never help with the harvest again, for Mike's legs were gone.

"Even if he had not to stop for me he was done. I see th' ould divil beginning to shake his head and Dan gallopin' up . . . the sun 'd roast ye there. . . . It is Con Cassidy that kilt us both," stormed young Mikky Maher—" to sell that to the Army so that he'd make a few dirty pounds."

"Oh, my God!" old Purcell muttered. He was a

very old man now.

"Everyone knew he had the staggers," said Mike, the ould sthageen. There's them should be hung for

it. He cost yer son his life."

Con Cassidy was at the door, listening. He looked from the face of father to father: the farmer sobbing to himself, Purcell without the relief of tears. For they knew.

"I wasn't after sellin' Shaky to the King," said Con slowly. "As themselves can tell ye, Mike, boy. God's thruth in it, they can tell ye how it was settled betune them. Sixty pound I heard he fetched, Mr. Purcell."

Mike sat up, his eyes set grimly. He was no longer a mere farm boy, but a man who had seen Death and War

and fighting.

"And whatever ye med on him losht ye him," said Mike bitterly, "Mr. Dan Purcell. And me, me two good legs. With a good horse we was both in aisy, for with all the bushes about they'd never have hit us. An' he was not the only one," went on Mike. "A runaway grey cost a trooper his life—a grey that I knows now was Mulcahy's, that no man cud ride. An' that ye knew when he bought him, too."

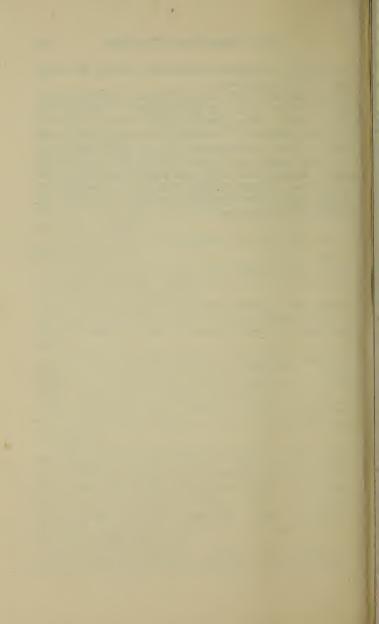
Old Purcell stood desolate, hopeless. The balance at the bank was a black thing to him now. Maher sobbed on, afraid to look at the stormy-eyed woman who hung

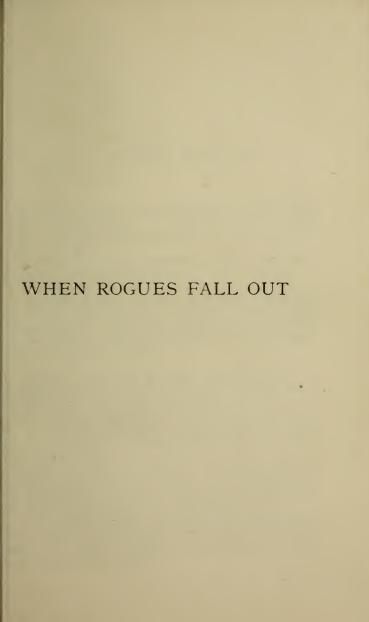
over their crippled son.

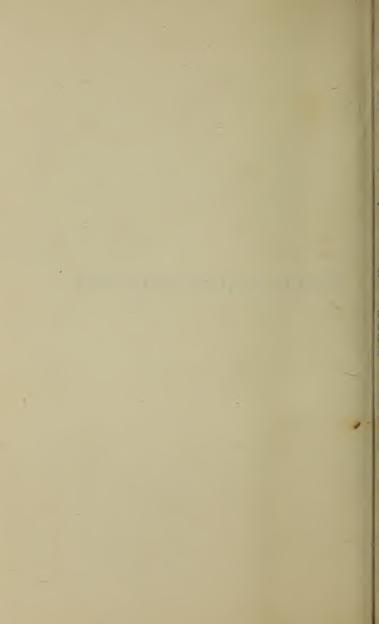
"Min should think, an' they buyin' what is to carry min in times of war," said Con quietly. "Ye blamt me wrong, Mike. Men should think. What use is his money to him now?" he added, watching the old man with a twisted, tortured face driving slowly away.

In the corner near the fire Mikky Maher the elder sobbed drearily and softly, and Mike's big young hand gripped fiercely at the blanket which hid his stumps, as he listened to Con Cassidy's account of how the old

horse got to the Army.







## WHEN ROGUES FALL OUT

"I F anyone was to ax me for apples," said Mr. Mat Sheedy bitterly, "it would be sure to be just the hour when there were only cherries on the trees."

He looked hard at an open letter, read it again and frowned. It ran as follows—

"General Hillyard wants a real good horse, the right thing. Well bred, up to weight, fast enough to win a hunter's race. I know you wou dn't have it yourself but Mr. Blundell might or Mr. Rivers, so let me know. He'd pay two fifty or more."

"Bedam," said Mat heavily. Knowing it to be perfectly useless, he went out to walk round his ramshackle yard. The centre was several feet deep with strawy manure; coppery and noisome pools glimmered in the hollows, and behind closely-closed doors five horses stood on dirty bedding, their coats shining under their ragged rugs.

A grey mare, fired for curbs. A showy bay, back of his knees and slack of his middle. A very good-looking brown, too bad a whistler to pass even with doctoring. Sheedy revi wed them in turn, grunting at each one.

"Good enough to pass on to some brave young soldiers that is active on their feet," he muttered, "but for a chaser . . . Danny, is there a blood horse anywhere that could be med up?"

G

"Andy Talty I heard tell bought one," said Danny the helper.

Mr. Sheedy bit a straw and not liking the flavour of it, spat it out before he remarked that Andy and himself

were not great.

"Frindly enough as far as the time of day goes," he muttered, "but like a badly-baked pie, he's sour below."

"He should have the bay mare forgot be now," said

Danny.

"There is some that never forgets except to Father Pat," said Sheedy crossly. "But if there is a horse to be got . . ." Then his eyes lighted. He squelched across the manure heap to pull open the door of a large shed.

"The Sultan!" he almost yelped.

"That'll sthand one gallop an' that could be thraced aisy to ye," snorted Danny.

A splendid bay horse stood in the hot gloom. Deephearted, well let down, with fine shoulders and a lean head perfectly set on, but as he moved round he limped and stood easing one of his well-shaped fore-legs. had bought him when he broke down a year before. He had patched him up twice, but before he could show him to anyone the leg had filled again.

"I'll go across," said Sheedy. "I have an idee."

He left his slated house to take a path across a brownhued patch of bog-land. The withering grasses swayed in the soft October wind. The deep gaps made by the cutting of the turf showed like black gashes with brown pools of still water below as though the cut bog's blood had gathered and lay there. A narrow road ran through the desolate bog, but Mr. Sheedy picked his way through the centre, sometimes skirting a patch of treacherous green, jumping from tussock to tussock, or across a glimmer of deep water until he reached sound ground and made for a small thatched cottage standing in a hollow with a few straggling trees round it. An attempt at a garden sent its straggling pleas to the god of flowers in the front, a few Michaelmas daisies still struggling

through the grass and docks.

Andy Talty's sister had once been imbued with ambition to win a prize in a cottagers' show, but had married and gone away and never tried it in her new home, declaring flowers to be worse trouble than childer.

Andy was a bland little man, with a perpetually greasy look, as if all his kindness had melted down and oozed out over his smiling face. His voice was low and sweet. The Taltys had been horse-dealers for generations, running together in clannish fashion when anyone else was to be done, and never above selling something hopeless to each other if any member of the family was fool enough to buy it.

Andy had got rid of three to his astute brother Nat by remarking, "That damn brute is no use, lave him there," and shutting the stable door, thus imbuing Nat with the idea that the animal in question was a treasure which

wanted time and skilful doctoring.

Mat Sheedy whistled to announce his arrival. Andy Talty slid—he never appeared to walk—round the corner of the house and nodded good evening. There

was the faintest trace of reserve in his greeting.

Mat Sheedy wanted, ostensibly, a harness cob for a customer, with so many virtues that Andy after a look at a grey roman nose stuck out over a half-door remarked thoughtfully that Mat had better be lookin' on the Elishan Fields for what he wanted, for the likes of it was not on earth.

"Unless ye could take a bit of action here and manners there an' blend up a horse," said Andy, "and paint him over with a price of two hundred guineas the ways the big dealers disguises what they wants to sell. For fifty pound what ye want isn't made, carrin' all the week and sthandin' at Mass on Sundays, Mat."

"Thinkin' ye might have one I gave ye the pre-

ference," said Mat, swallowing benevolently.

"Ye'd always be the one to try to do me the good turn," returned Andy simply. "I have a good grey drivin' cob there, but he is only an or'nary cob just quick to harness, with a shy an' a heiss (kick) at the back of his mind. Will ye step inside, Mat?"

They walked into the stuffy back parlour, which smelt of mahogany and whisky, and a decanter was

produced.

Mat drank some of the fresh and fiery spirit, and ate biscuits. Since it is always polite to eat with a guest,

Andy took tea.

They talked amicably of hunting and horses. Of the gaps made by the war, and the difficulty of producing

the right stuff.

And then Mat pulled out his letter. "Look what I could get if I had me eye on the horse—an' a bit of profit to divide with the man who found him for me."

Andy's blue eyes lit up. He knew that Mat had come over for a reason. He read the letter carefully.

"There's ye'r black mare," he said, "or the

bay."

"From what is in the letter," said Mat, "the man has the appearance of knowing a good horse. Betune friends, Andy, them two horses must go to buyers that'll be taken with coats and ginger. Boys have a great passion on tails," he finished emphatically, "Great entirely. But——"he leant across the table. "There's the Sultan."

"That ye bought in open auction, a well-known race

horse," said Andy crisply.

"He might aisily have died on me be now or gone to farrum work," said Mat. "Only ould Danny knows of him now. I have no helper. I could not be sellin' the Sultan, but if I heard tell of a frind of mine had a great blood hunter, an brought the General here. Blood hunters bought in fairs break down, and no word to be

said. An'—there is a hundred pound in it, Andy, for

ye'r trouble."

The fire in Andy's eyes brightened, the kindly look deepened on his face. He seemed to simmer in an oil bath of kindliness.

Mat went on talking. The bog road was almost deserted, a hooded sheeted horse could slip along it in the dark unseen by anyone. Andy could give out that he had a good thorough bred not on view. In fact Danny had heard that he had one.

The two talked it over, Andy simmering softly, and finally Mat Sheedy, smiling, hurried back across the bog, to take out a sheet of flimsy paper, and pen an elaborately

careful letter.

"A friend of his had the very thing. A big blood horse, bay, sound and a great lepper. Seven year old, fast as motor cars. The pedigree was unbeknownst, but it was stamped on the horse, and if the buyer was knowledgeable, he'd know any pedigree was but the twist of a tongue. The horse could be ready to be seen in a

week or so, or any day."

The matter ran on oiled wheels. Guinane, the big dealer, communicated with his client, mentioning the fact that Sheedy had spotted two or three high priced horses for him in his time. The Sultan, renamed Tally Ho, had his leg boiled and reboiled until the doubtful tendon lay flat and fine. He was put over a couple of banks, Mat thanking a kindly God above when the tendon still held, and finally one dark night the Sultan went as a sheeted ghost along the road to Ballina to be received by Andy Talty in person and stabled in the biggest loose box.

On the following day General Hillyard arrived in a motor car, accompanied by Guinane, a ferrety-looking youth with marvellous breeches and gaiters, and a dia-

mond horseshoe pin in his tie.

They looked as in duty bound at Sheedy's horses, the General praising them all with the heartiness of a man who knew he would never own them, until he saw the whistling brown and this he offered to buy for a

friend if it jumped well.

The brown having acquitted himself perfectly over the banks all round, flown a stone wall and hopped a stick, Mat parted with him for a price which left no room for profit, being anxious, as he said inwardly, to put a smooth glaze on things.

They then spun over the narrow bog road with its yawning ditches cut clear on either side, and the marks of the Sultan's hoofs deep in the grass at the right.

Andy received them blandly. Yes, he had a great blood horse. He had bought him in a fair at Galway.

Pedigree?

"They gave me one from Eclipse down to Roi Herode," said Andy, chuckling sweetly, "but I could give as good a one meself and make it more modern like. 'There isn't a grey hair on him,' says I, when the owner rowled out Roi Herode's name. 'There is a white patch on his quarter,' says he, an' there he had me."

General Hillyard smiled discreetly.

Andy was benevolence from head to heel, coupled with a carelessness which made Mat Sheedy nervous. What if his ally should sell him by neglecting to stupe the Sultan's leg? He shivered slightly as the horse's box was opened.

"Hatchin a chill yer are, Mat?" said Andy sympathetically, "or they do be sayin' them shivers is a sign of a troubled conscience, but Mat Sheedy wouldn't

have that same."

The door swung to show the Sultan, now named Tally Ho, littered to his powerful hocks in golden wheat straw. His skin threw off a bloom. He had been fattened with discretion so as not to look soft.

As he was wheeled round Mat saw the look on Hill-

yard's face which means that all was right.

The big bay was a model of what he would have been, a high-class chaser.

He was taken out and cantered, his smooth level stride eating the level field; he acquitted himself well over two banks, a few gaps and a wide trench, and Guinane examined him.

Mat's teeth gritted a little as the dealer's hand fluttered

over the bad tendon.

"Seems a little full," he said.

"He is short of work," said Andy carelessly, "an' we done a lot of leppin' with him yestherday."

As the horse was galloped for his wind, General Hill-

yard stood admiring him.

"He is exactly what I've been looking for," he said blithely. "Too good just to chase foxes on over here."

Then the General went on to enlarge on various buys

and one or two unfortunate occurrences.

"I never overlook being cheated," he said. "One or two people who have had we have been sorry for it afterwards. I tell you, Sheedy, for I follow things up."

Mat Sheedy said emphatically that them that 'd do a dirty trick deserved what they'd get, and he did not

like the way in which Andy nodded.

There was nothing to do but write the cheque. Two hundred and eighty pounds. Andy had altered the price, and Mat was wondering whether he would dare

to try and keep the extra money.

"We can drop you," said Guinane. Mat felt that it was better to go. He was thanked by dealer and purchaser and the rest of his afternoon was taken up by riding the whistling brown to the station, seeing him off with the splendid Sultan, who stepped into his box quite sound.

The next morning was fresh and fair. Light clouds played teg with a west wind scurrying merrily across a playground of blue. Mat rode his grey to Ballina, and slipped off lightly to greet Andy, who was blistering a

big bay two-year-old.

Mat looked round to see there were no listeners.

"Well, that was great," he said happily.

"I think the gentleman liked his horse," said Andy

blandly. "Did ye want anythin', Mat?"

"I came for the money," said Mat in surprise, "the hundred and eighty. It was a great deal for ye, Andy."

Andy getting up, said, "The money for what?"

as he absently wiped his tingling hands.

"For the Sultan," said Mat. "For selling me horse." Andy Talty shook his head, a puzzled air veiling his benevolence.

"For me horse," snapped Mat. "The horse that

come over. The horse ye sowlt to the General."

"What horse I sowlt to the General?" said Andy, "a horse called Tally Ho. There is a racehorse called the Sultan. Didn't I hear ye name the bay I parted with Tally Ho yerself, Mat Sheedy? Maybe Danny dropped the Sultan in a boghole," said Andy. "He havin' a drop taken. I knows nothin' of him. The only horse as ye saw was Tally Ho, that nice bay, that I sowlt too cheap. But bein' obliged to ye for the sale, I'd go to ten pound commission Mat, and that I'll sind ye."

Mat backed away, his mouth sagging, his face crimson

and wet. Words failed him.

"Did ye dream ye sent that old broken chaser here?"

said Andy pleasantly.

Speechless, Mat stared. He had no case. To call the aid of the law would be his own damnation for evermore.

"There was the matter of a deal long ago that ye beshted me in, Mat Sheedy. Did ye even spell quits, me boy, and feel the letters grate on ye'r tongue?"

"Ye dirty hound, ye've done me," yelped Mat, leaping

to his stirrup.

But on his troubled way home, being an Irishman,

he grinned suddenly.

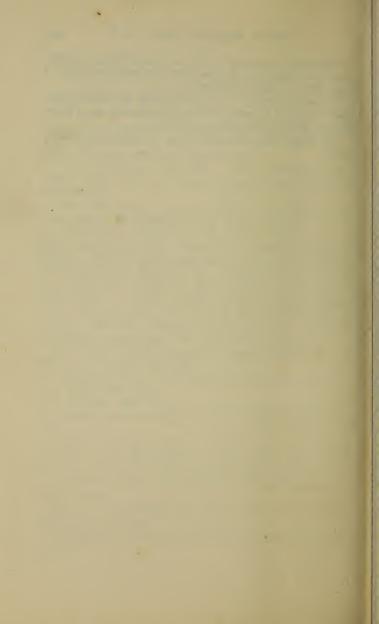
"Begripes, an' he did it nately," he said between his ravings.

Next day he received a dirty note enclosed in a letter, which set forth that it was for commission on sale of Tally Ho, to General Hillyard.

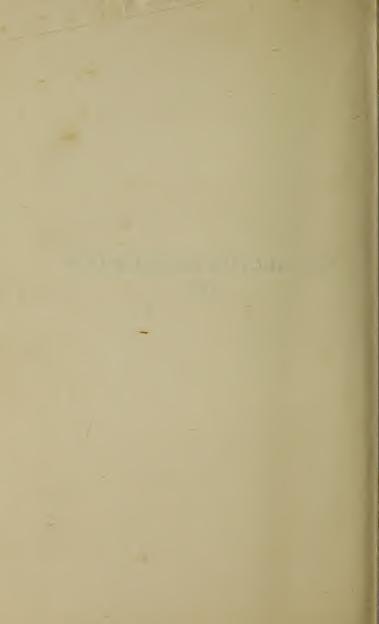
The Sultan lasted two months before he broke down, Andy receiving a fervent letter of thanks for such a horse

and a request to find others like him.

"It would take Mat Sheedy to do that," said Andy softly.



## SIR HECTOR DEVEREUX'S BET



## SIR HECTOR DEVEREUX'S BET

IR HECTOR MACNAMARA DEVEREUX rested comfortably in his cabin on the Irish mail-boat with no sub-conscious qualms of being submarined, for it was before the days of war. On the strength of his Grand Aunt by marriage's surname having been given to him—Mrs. Macnamara had been his godmother—Sir Hector always said genially that he was half Irish, and had told his friends that he was going to see what was partially his own country.

He was a large flabby man who when possible wore spats, and being vain as to his feet, never walked with complete freedom. One of His Majesty's ministers, he had for years taken part in heated debates as to the settling of the Irish question,—these futile arguments by grown men about a land where people are ever half children, too quick to follow tempting council, always

resentful of a guiding hand.

A fortnight before, publicly heckled by a very little M.P. with a sing-song brogue, Sir Hector had lost his temper and declared that it was all nonsense,—that he was half Irish and understood the people thoroughly, and would go over himself and return with the thing, not in a nutshell, but in his head.

"For how long?" queried the M.P., his eyes twinkling.

"For ten days," boomed Sir Hector.

"And you'll understand us thoroughly in ten days. Then I'll say no more—till you come back," and the member for Cara sat down smiling softly.

But he met Sir Hector outside and offered an even

fiver against it.

Sir Hector had often been asked to stay at Castle

Cahirlish, the residence of the descendants of his great aunt by marriage, and he wrote, kindly offering himself

as a guest.

He did not take his man, but started alone. His conversation of the last two days before he left London being of the mistakes made about a country which was really like all other countries and merely talked up, for

special reasons of its politicians.

He made his farewells to a London which glittered with light, whose advertisment signs wasted brilliancy, whose people knew no rationing, and he travelled lapped in comfort until on a grey February day the mail-boat stole in to Kingstown, which was creeping to light out of the morning mists. Sir Hector, who loved comfort, decided to go on the second train to Cahirlish instead of by the mail. He advised the change by wire, disregarding the fact that Cahirlish Castle was twelve miles from a village, and did not trouble to enquire when the message might be delivered.

The waiter who took it glanced at the direction and said something about hoping that Tomsey's bike wouldn't be in the wars as usual, to which Sir Hector, half hearing,

asked the man if he knew Cahirlish.

"My father kep' the post-office," said the waiter. "An' that's why I'm wonderin'. It is eight mile from the village—easy enough if Tomsey Delane's bike is right, but if it is not, you wouldn't know why shoe leather was made for that felley, for he'd never walk."

Sir Hector ate his good breakfast without qualms, in fact he scarcely thought of the matter. He took a corner seat in a crowded train and spun onwards through the lonely beauty of the Southern route, his journey made pleasant by a companion, a clean-shaven middleaged man who was willing to talk about Ireland.

"They've been telling me it's behind the times, that nothing would ever make the people practical. So far as I can see there is no difference in the two countries,"

said Sir Hector.

The clean-shaven man said nothing rather expressively.

"Good terms—clean hotels."

"When you pass the Bog of Allen," said the other man and paused—"I'm a Country Inspector not so very far from Cahirlish. We've been having a lively time. Proclaimed meetings and so on—oh no, not all mismanagement—just Irish natures. You'll have a long drive to Miss Macnamara's."

Hector said he expected her car was all right and the police officer left the train at Maryborough. He smiled

as he went.

Sir Hector thought that the wondrous mystic boglands ought to be drained and reclaimed; he said so to a fellow passenger, who said, "Drain the Bog of Allen! Might as well try to put Hades in cold storage." At which Sir Hector was ruffled, and took quite ten minutes before he began to explain modern drainage and its wonders.

He also regretted the lack of cultivation—and opening on that was answered by," My good sir, think of the rotten scent Plough carries, and of riding through it!!" and then found himself ignored as men babbled of hunting.

The grey day darkened to one of drifting clouds which blotted out the hill-tops and came low down, purple and sullen, to fling a bandage of stinging fine rain upon the

earth.

It was rain which came with a raw fine cold, which drifted under the door and numbed feet and hands even

in the shelter of the railway carriage.

Sir Hector found they were late at the busy junction, into which they thundered importantly. They ran on through the finest grass country in the world. As if some shopkeeper of earth had unfurled a great roll of mellow pasture and let it slip out flat and green, airing his wondrous wares. Field upon field, already taking on an emerald hue, running across the vast tableland and to the dark feet of the Galtees.

It was late when Sir Hector left his warm carriage and stamped his feet on a wind-swept platform as he enquired for the West Cahirlish train. West Cahirlish was the station. He then was bumped and clattered on, tired and cold, until he was roused by a sing-song note—"West Cahirlish—change here for Skibier an' the Arnagh line."

Sir Hector extracted himself and signalled to the porter to take his suit cases. The said porter informed him very sympathetically that the milk cans had to be rowled, and until the Skibier'd start, he couldn't touch

luggage if it was God's own.

The Minister took out his own ill-humouredly, making a note of it, and as the seething platform cleared asked icily that at least his things should be taken to the car for Cahirlish, which was done, despite several calls for

Patsy O'Leary.

After two or three minutes O'Leary returned to ask was it Walsh's jinnit or Dayly's ass, for them were the only two outside and nayther knew anything about luggage. "Car for Cahirlish—Miss Macnamara. Davy met the 1.30 and wasn't best plazed either as he missed Karry Keefe's buryin'."

"It is tin mile," said the station master, "an' more

maybe-with the hills that is there."

Sir Hector checked a frantic desire to explain that gradients do not affect distance, as he waited, shivering in the misty dimness of the closing day, and instead spoke irritably of his telegram.

"If it were the one that come in for the Castle this day," said a voice, "Tomsey's bike was broke an' it is

goin' up by the baker's cart in the morning."

Sir Hector groaned aloud.

"In any case the coachman is sure to come back." Sir Hector stared through the narrow gate of the station up a purposeless looking road diverting round the base of a bare hill.

"If it is Patsy he cannot," chimed in another voice, that of a youth in check tweed bicycling suit, "for he joined in to the funeral at Knockabin, an' when I left the mare was peevish with tire—I seen her——" here

the youth flushed a ruby red and showed a marked disposition to retreat, hastily edging away as he muttered something about his aunt's groceries, and eyeing Sir Hector unhappily. Tomsey's bike was quite well but he had wanted to go to the funeral.

The baronet was so wrapped in his sorrows that he scarcely noticed the words muttered by the porter. "In me eye it was bruck, but not as ye wantin' to get to

Crusheen."

Sir Hector remembered this afterwards with a thrill of something resembling horror—as he realised the manner in which wires are delivered from West Cahirlish.

"And in heaven's name shall I have to walk?" he said piteously, so oblivious at the time of any discrepancies as to broken-down bicycles that Tomsey, his conscience pricking him, took comfort and returned to him.

"Andy Slattery's black mare," he said thoughtfully, "might make it. If there is a sphot of Andy sober yer honour, I'll have him here in tin minnits. But he was at Crusheen an' I would not be sure I'd find even that

same," he said as he turned out.

The ten minutes slipped to half an hour, and Sir Hector was thinking of a ten-mile walk in tight boots, when a disreputable looking side car lurched and rattled down the road. It was drawn by a weedy-looking black mare, her coat covered with dried sweat and her head hanging sullenly, the driver shouting at her as she came.

Sir Hector and his suit cases being piled on to the car, Andy Slattery, a blandly unsober youth with a spotty face said, "G'out of that, out," and started at a gallop.

Sir Hector clung to his rocking perch desperately—but just as he imagined he had found his balance a sudden stop sent him flying ponderously into the muddy road, one suit case following.

"It is the door of the sthables," said Andy Slattery

unsteadily; "git up, yer honour."

Sir Hector climbed in silence. In silence he was driven along the aimless wandering road which swept down into swamps, and then turned away from the level valleys to clamp itself on to mountainous hill. It rained greyly

and persistently and a chill wind whistled.

Mile by mile and yard by yard the black mare died out—until the whip singing off her sides did not even make her switch her tail, and Sir Hector woke up to

abuse her as a useless jade.

"No, but the besht hack in all Ireland," said Andy in offended tones, "but what'd sthand Cregan Malone? Out twice last night with his friends goin' to him and to-day didn't he keep her from nine till three, an' the journey sixteen mile and all."

Sir Hector said coldly that if that was so this man Malone must be a callous brute, and that he would note the address and mention the matter to the S.P.C.A.

As the mare crawled languidly, Andy broke into argument concerning Cregan Malone's kind-heartedness.

"Then why did he so put upon a dumb beast?"

"He could not help it."

Sir Hector thundered "Help it," as the mare stopped

and wished to know why not.

"He is dead presently, an' was buried to-day," said Andy ruefully. "I'd say if we left in this mare, yer honour"—he listened to Sir Hector spluttering—"at Dan Crehen's house, his jennet would take us on. The scald to that Tomsey that was so set on the buryin' he med out his bike was broke," he added, getting down to open a gate.

"He—he—deliberately—did not take the wire,"

gasped Hector Cavendish—"an official messenger!"
"He is courtin' the corpse's dather," said Andy placidly. "The sorra the taste was wrong with the bike."

Andy knocked up a friendly farmer who reft something grey and small from a shed and seemed delighted to help, Andy retreating indoors for refreshment. "She is two sizes too small," said Andy, getting up. "An' it will be the mercy of God if we do not capsize."

The jennet showed her mettle by starting with a squeal

and a kick, and the car rocked down a steep abyss of darkness at twenty miles an hour.
"Aisy, Bess," said Andy, who had darned up his

patched sobriety.

"For God's sake, driver," yelled Sir Hector.
"She will not kape it up," said Andy.

But as Bess, soured by untimely rousing, squealed and tore on, the powerful lights of a car accelerated to top speed glided up the road and with "Ye schamer! Andy pulled aside.

He was too late. The wing Sir Hector sat upon broke with a wrenching snarl of breaking wood, amid a shower of curses. The baronet slid into the motor

clutching at anything.

"You and your friends drunk as usual, Andy," said a voice calmly. "Out you go," and a tall man poked Sir Hector over the edge, letting him fall on to a heap of muddy grass.

"The gentleman is as sober as meself," said Andy with dignity. "If anyone has a drop taken, me lord, it

would be the chauffoor."

Sir Hector rose to confront Lord Annadhew, one of the authorities whom he had come over to see. In a

trembling voice he made himself known.

"Oh, by gad—Devereux," said Annadhew easily. "What bad luck. Not hurt, I hope. Fell among thieves when you met Andy, didn't you? The stuff he carries is awful. Lunch with me, Friday. Hope you can both sit one side—good-night."

With the bitter knowledge that he was considered to be drunk, Sir Hector saw the car drive on. He was beginning to wonder if anyone could understand Ireland. He was weary of futile rage. It was ten when the lopsided car reached Cahirlish; a great rambling house with a river running close by in the darkness.

Sir Hector, utterly weary, was greeted by an old bewhiskered butler, and ushered into a low-ceiled room

which glowed with warmth and comfort.

He ate and explained sleepily—he stumbled to a room

which smelt of turf smoke, and slept dreamlessly until the old man roused him, sympathetically proffering condolence as to the night's misadventure.

"That Tomsey should be hunted," said James. "If ye'r own self was dead an 'a weddin' on, Tomsey's bike 'ud be broke before he'd bring the wire to let ve know, Sir Hector."

Irritated and weary, Sir Hector came to breakfast, greeted his cousin by marriage and looked out amazed at the beauty of Cahirlish. Miss Elisha Macnamara showed no surprise at the visit until she heard the reason

-then her cackle was not melodious.

"You want to see Crowe, the members, and Father O'Loughlin and Annadhew. Oh, you've seen him. Don't see them together, Hector, and don't imagine you'll hear anything that will make you wiser. You've a bet on it?" Miss Macnamara glowed to warmth. "I hope it's not big," she said pleasantly, "but I'm glad you're a sport, Hector." At this point the telegram and a loaf of bread came in together—and Elisha Macnamara listened to the account against Tomsey-who was to be instantly reported.

"If you report Tomsey he'll only get ten witnesses to prove he wasn't in the village," she said cheerfully. "And he's such a nice boy, Hector, and always has a fox in Toomvara. You can't report a good covert keeper,

vou know."

Sir Hector left his egg untouched for some time.

He spent busy days—he had long talks which were as salutary as froth, for, when he had finished them, he found the solid residue almost nil, and he took notes feverishly. Tomsey, who came with many telegrams, greeted him as a friend, hoping that his honour wasn't the worse of the black ill luck of the bicycle being broke the first day, and bewailing the distance so sweetly that Sir Hector found himself, almost as a man who dreams, laying a bright half-crown in a responsive, freckled palm, and receiving a full account of the last hunt from Toomvara in return.

When questioned as to politics, Tomsey replied that he had never seen an M.P. that could ride to hounds, so he had no mind for them, and departed blithely.

Neither could all Hector's explanations remove a

slight and irritating smile from Annadhew's face.

"Thought you were old Nat Lonigan when you bumped in," he said. "You want the items of the fuss at Ardagh? I don't think the men themselves know what it was about."

Sir Hector wanted to know, heavily, if anyone knew

anything.

"Oh, they know a bit of sport," said the Peer, and

began to talk of his grey hunter.

The ten days were nearly over when a meeting was proclaimed at Ardagh and Sir Hector drove over, full sure that he would get to the very heart of a disturbance and hear what the Irish had to say, and the dignified response of the police officer.

He drove early into a bleak little town, which had a market square in its midst, where he found the genial young D.I., Hugh Clanchy, commanding a very small

force of men.

"They've a huge crowd in and I've 'phoned for reinforcements," said Clanchy. "If they rush us, we're done—they want to speak here and we won't have it. I'd go home if I were you, sir."

"But if you let them speak and someone of our side

debated-" said Sir Hector.

"And what the dickens could you debate about—specially as they wouldn't listen," said Clanchy, giving an order to his men.

Big brakes be-flagged and be-drummed drew up, a couple of motors whizzed in and an independent-minded band struck up "God save Ireland" in all the keys it knew.

The small cordon of police were drawn across the square, and a huge crowd massed, making little swaying rushes, showing their teeth as it were, ready, if one blow came, to rush in and do murder.

"I'd get away if I were you," said Larry over his square shoulder. "When the batons begin to crack, they'll hurt us here—we're too few. Train bringing some others broken down."

The crowd increased its size and power. It passed

to jeering before it took to its ugly work.

A fat little man called for free passage to the square

and the thin dark line remained immovable.

An old woman, her grey hair loosened, jostled into a front place and with a jeer to the "polis" put her hands on her stout hips and coming opposite Larry broke into derisive jigging. The low murmur of the crowds was the note which goes before storm—mingled with "Nancy," "Well done, ould Nance."

Nancy Rea was defying the officer. Ireland showing

her contempt for authority.

Larry Clanchy drew a long breath, then, without a word, his face stonily graven, he hooked up his sword, put his arms akimbo, and with the same gravity stood out opposite Nancy, his feet stepping deftly; the low growl gave way to silence, broken by an "Oh, my God," from Sir Hector.

Larry's feet cut the air like lightning. Nancy's stout boots clattered madly; she had been doing the

step dance of her country.

Across the silence, shrill and sweet, broke a tuneful whistle of the wind that shakes the barley. It was taken up. Someone laughed. Someone cried "Success." In as many keys as the band the old stirring jig tune shrilled, while the fat man in the wagonette cursed forcibly, unheeded.

"He'll do ye, Nancy. She is blown. Success, Misther

Clanchy. Ye ken sthep it."

"La la la la aity," lilted the jig notes. Old Nancy gasped, but stuck to it bravely. Larry jigged and his

men stood keeping guard quite gravely.

Nancy Rea showed signs of stopping; marching feet sounded steadily coming from the station, and the curt bark of an order rang out.

Larry Clanchy stepped back as gravely as he stepped out; save for the heave of his chest, he was once more a decorous police officer.

Sir Hector clung to the village pump and yearned for England. "They'd have rushed us in two minutes," he heard Larry say to a superior. "Good idea, what?"

The mail-train was due for Dublin in an hour. A shaken man sent a wire to Cahirlish to have his things sent on and caught it eagerly.

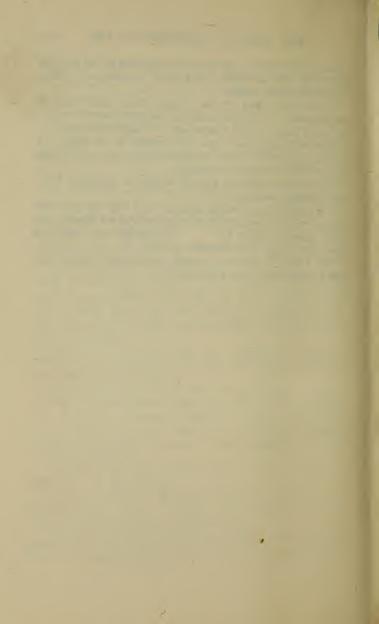
Three days later he rose to answer a question from

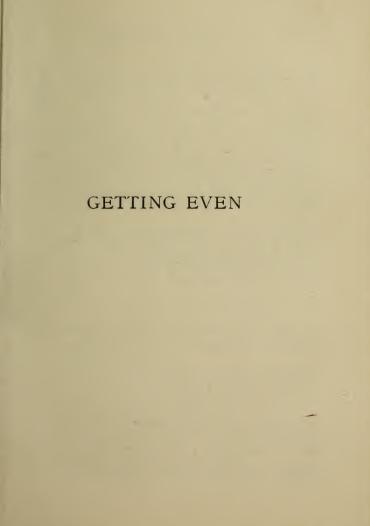
the Opposite benches.

"My right honourable friend," said the Member for Cara, "may have something interesting to say on the Irish Question after his . . ." He caught Sir Hector's eye—and juggled the words cleverly.

Ten minutes later he opened an envelope containing

a five-pound note and smiled softly.







#### GETTING EVEN

HEY'LL never dare to come near us," said Francis Costello to his life-long enemy,

Martin Keough.

Martin was a ferret-faced, red-headed little fellow, fisherman by trade, with a taste for rebellion as fiery as his hair. When he was not fishing he poached, so dexterously that he was never caught.

The Costellos knew it was their rabbits and ferrets which brought in the money to deck Ellie and Katie Keough with flowery hats and new frocks, and supplied Martin with whisky and cigarettes, but no one could

catch him.

He also speared salmon and netted trout, and was even reputed to have sold fox cubs. Behind a veil of apparent civility, Martin Keough and the heir to Castle Costello had been enemies all their lives. Now, with extreme bitterness, they discussed politics, Martin sneering softly.

"If they want arrums, they'll get arrums," said

Martin.

When Francis Costello snapped out that the man who took his would live to repent it, Martin's smile was a

blend of delicacy and derision.

Castle Costello harbour would have been a quiet place if Martin had not, with his cunning tongue, stirred its inhabitants to hatred of the English, and held up the Germans as the good nation of the earth.

Youths and old men who listened believed that should Germany rule all, the debt owed for land to the British Government would be cancelled; that sugar rationing

would be abolished, and bacon fall in price.

On a misty autumn evening, with the sea sobbing

softly as it crept up, Frank Costello argued, and finally lost his temper as he realised that Martin's replies were

slippery and yet pungent.

The Sinn Feiners had raided many of the big places and came away with only old muskets or useless weapons, sensible people having hidden their guns. Young Frank kept his openly in his arms cabinet, with a loaded revolver in a box on his dressing-table.

He strolled home through the woods, growling to himself, coming through the whispering dusk to the big house set on a bluff above the sheltered harbour. His mother, old and fragile, was on the steps. She had a heart so weak that any shock might stop its beating for ever. With her was his sister Rose, recovering from a breakdown from hard work in France, and his younger sister Lily.

Mrs. Costello talked with faint contempt of the raids.

She trusted in Frank.

He had been wounded and was home for some months, limping still.

"I believe that ruffian, Martin, will try and get the

guns just to annoy me," he said.

Next morning Francis Delapore Costello literally shook from helpless rage. He was an officer in His Majesty's senior service, a brave man, and hot-tempered; yet he stood helpless, in blue silk pyjamas, a bath-sponge his only weapon, while fifteen masked and armed raiders calmly ransacked his mother's house. He could have rushed on them and smote them with his fists, but a helpless old woman and two young ones were behind him, and bloodshed would only reduce them to despair.

His mother's face was pale, and he could see the agony

in her eyes, though she stood proudly as if fearless.

The raiders had chosen their time well. Frank had come out of his bath to see the crowd of men, most of them with cloths tied over their faces, one, the leader, with a deep black mask. This gentleman, in a soothing squeak, bade Mr. Costello "be aisy."

A small man, his head in a cloth as a plum pudding

ready for boiling, made easy way down the passage.
"If you dare to take my guns," foamed Frank,
"I'll---"

1111-

Here he raised the bath-sponge and someone chuckled softly.

Frank's head went up.

"Very well, Martin Keough," he said crisply.

The small man hesitated for just a second, then walked on.

"Look hard and see if his hair is red," said Frank

to Lily, speaking in vile French.

At this Lily Costello followed the searchers, staring hard at them, and the man in the black mask, raising a cheap automatic, told Frank to keep still. To hurl bath-sponge and soap would be undignified. Frank's rage was absolutely painful as he saw the return of the searchers with two shot-guns and his revolver.

One of the others from behind his cloth covering said,

" Nate entirely."

"The wren-boys have got the guns," said Lily. "Now, mother, we can come away; it's all over."

She pulled her mother back to her bedroom, and Frank, dancing in his blue silk suit, let his rage loose, with slow words which came from him with difficulty; he swore to be even with the men who had trapped him and caught him unawares.

The deft, quick movements of the head searcher were familiar to him. It was all he could do not to tear the

man's mask off and risk the row to follow.

"And thank ye kindly," said a squeak in Frank's ear, emanating from behind the thick cloth tied over this little man's face.

"Someone signalled to you that I was in my bath,"

he said. "Someone-"

They went downstairs, and he rushed for another pistol hidden away, to find the key gone from its place on his table. Leaning out of his window, he noticed that a towel hung from one of the maid's rooms.

Martin Keough's cousin was an under-housemaid.

Frank drew a long, deep breath. The raiders had slipped

into the trees and he could not see them.

He did not even go for the police, because his brain was filled with an idea to pay Martin out. Late in the afternoon he rode his motor bike to Drinmere, a harbour across the hill, where he went to see Anthony Persse, home on ten days' leave, and told him that he was quite sure Keough had been the leader of the raid.

"With his chat of German friends," stormed Frank.
"If a U-boat would come and take him and his guns,"

he growled. "I'll get even with him."

Then Francis Costello jumped up suddenly, waving his hands.

"Crawling wasp," said Anthony sympathetically. Frank returned, "Crawling ass," with more haste than politeness.

"How much German can you talk?" he shouted

eagerly. "Much?"

Anthony replied modestly that he had picked up a good bit from the little nurse who had looked after him before he was exchanged.

"Little fair-haired girl," he said. "But it's not exactly—er—what we said to each other. Not exactly

conversational, Frank."

"I'm up to Schwein Hunde and Dumme Yunge myself," said Frank. "And odd bits. Prosit. Verboten.

Silentium. Verstanden. Now look here."

Then he unfolded his scheme. His launch, the Willy Wagtail, was not a submarine, but, covered with tarpaulins on a dark night, with sticks rigged as guns, she might look like one.

Martin and his cousin, Jamesey, would be out fishing every night. They fished off the Hook, a nosing rut of rocks, with a hundred little creeks and inlets near it. If the Willy Wagtail could be slipped across to lie in one and wait there, and come out disguised.

"If it could . . . I might get even," said Frank, staring at the sullen grey sea, which heaved in big oily

swells.

An hour later he started for home. The men in Castle Costello village looked duly elated as he got down at the post-office. He sensed rather than saw or heard looks and whispers. Leaving the bike, he walked to the pier, to find Martin there, diligently mending a net. The tide was low, the tarry, fishy smell of all piers hung heavily in the still air.

Far off, grey smudges of smoke marked the track of coasting steamers; fiercer trails, of the King's Navy

convoying some liner or transport.

"There is word down from the maids that the Republic

med a raid on ye," said Martin, mending diligently.

His hands were black with tar, and one forefinger was tied up. Frank looked hard.

"Some fools took some old guns," said Frank care-

lessly.

"An' is it true ye were naked in ye'r bath," said Martin sympathetically, "and couldn't show a fight at all?"

"It is true that I was afraid of them," said Frank.
"Quite true, Martin. When the sound of one shot might have killed my mother," he added quietly.

"Cute ones," observed Martin, holding up his handi-

work.

"If you're out to-night, bring me some fish," said Frank. "We want some. Mackerel if they're in, or lobsters."

"We might be drawin' the pots late." Martin's tone

was puzzled. He had expected suspicion.

About dusk that night the Willy Wagtail motorlaunch sped through the dimness until she was stopped below a reef of high rocks, where she floated in calm water, her side touching thick seaweed, and two men worked hard at her, until, after two hours, her original outlines were swathed in black tarpaulin; a packing-case covered over made semblance of a conning tower, and some old drain pipes, in the dark, were quite like guns.

Lieut. Frank Costello, in a flowing beard and oilskins, practised a guttural voice successfully, and young

Anthony Persse had gummed on a fierce moustache, culled from the Iceland pony's mane, a hirsute appendage so fiercely curled up that he was quite Kaiser-like.

After a time the flap and squeak of sail and sheet and the gentle lap of water told of an approaching boat.

Keough would anchor to take up his lobster-pots

before he sailed out to fish.

The sound of two sing-song voices came across the misty night, and the Willy Wagtail's engine throbbed to life.

A long, dark shape, she crept from the shadows to slip up beside the smack.

"God in hevin above us," said Martin, looking at the

camouflaged boat.

"Dumme Yunge," hailed Anthony fiercely. "Halt!"
"Germins," gasped Jamesey "We are frindly, yer honours the Kaisers, frindly."

"Stramme, schweinhund, verboten," returned Anthony.

"We vont—"

"Oh, God save us," said Martin, sitting down. "Save and guard us, what do you want? Is it petrol, that is

not just here?"

In broken, guttural English, Frank explained they wanted arms. Germany was running short. Hundreds of U-boats round the coast were to get two or three guns from every fishing-boat or sink the boat.

Here a drain pipe, poised on an improvised pivot,

swung threateningly.

"Hümmel! Bimmel! A l'instant."

"Keep off French, you blighter," murmured Anthony

softly.

"Unter den Linden. Down to pottom of Zuider Zay," growled Frank. "Give us the arms, vishermans."

Here he swung a drain pipe dexterously.

In anguished tones of fear, Martin declaimed, Why would he bring guns on his fishin' boat? He had ne'er a gun, with the police snappin' every waypon. Not a one.

"I will gif you vun half hour to find two gun and von

pistole," said Frank. "You go find them. I keep your cus—"—he gulped, for the word cousin had almost escaped him—" your cusset vrend as hostage. You raise alarm—not come—down boat, cousin—all. Seenk. We are Germans. An' you take guns to help us shoot the English."

"An' four gallons of John Jamieson below," came through the gloom from Jamesey.

There were whisperings in the dark, the stir of frightened men.

"But are ye not sindin' guns to Ireland," gasped

Martin, "so why should ye be wantin'?"

"All other places haf guns ready for us to-night. Gome. Two goot gun, von pistole. Dirty minutes I gif you-no more."

He listened to a frenzied outburst as to the wickedness of sinking an Irish fishing-boat, and gave curt response that Germany made war. What she required she took.

"Six off de dirty minutes; I gif no more. Hoch heimer Bern castler a doctor. Der Tag. At it, Tony,"

Frank's German was running low.

"Go fetch. Ich Lieber Dich," thundered Anthony. "Schnell—that is queek. Hertzblud. Kleinchin. Wunderbar Schon. Ich Lieber Dich. Du bist vie eine Blume. Madel Sein Madel Mein."

Before this torrent Martin wilted. With a stifled wail, he pulled up the little dinghy, falling rather than getting

into it, baffling Jamesey's efforts to follow him.

"Von dirty minutes an' we sink your scheep," said Frank, his bearded, oilskinned bulk showing in the gloom. "If you tell poleece, we seenk your ship and go under sea ourselves. You no goot."

A whisper rose from the sea.

"Hand me out the jars of whisky, Jamesey," and the muttered response: "Faix I will not, or ye'd never come back here, me boy. An' it's the dirty thrick to lave me here," shrieked Jamesey aloud.

They could hear the swish of Martin's oars and see the phosphorus gleam on the oily sea. Then the quiet was broken by Jamesey, whose terror was too deep for silence.

In obsequious tones he wished to know where their honours came from. An' if it was not the damp soort of a life down under the wather. He professed fervent friendship to the dacent Germins, and presently, encouraged by responses of Dumkoph or Schun Liebchein, he shyly proffered a drop to keep the cowld out.

"Good egg," murmured young Persse. "Bring up all vot is dere, veeskey, vine," commanded Anthony.

"All—Blumchien."

Jamesey said that maybe Martin would not be best plazed, but he went below, and, under stress, went again until four gallon jars of whisky were ranged on the deck.

The moon stayed behind dark clouds. The two officers sat in dignified silence, wondering what would happen if another boat passed, or if Martin would ever return.

Then the plash of oars sounded; the boat bumped

the smack's side, and Martin climbed on board.

He had hurried until he dripped, and he wavered on the borderland which marks the space between futile anger and whining for mercy and payment.

His own guns shwep from him, but surely his honour the Capt'in would now give him the vally of them same.

"Hocheimer," rasped Frank. "Did you not collect them for Uns? Dumme Javowle Stramme."

"I did not," said Martin clearly. "I was the leader,

yer honour."

"Strafe," said Anthony, haughtily, putting the guns on board the Willy Wagtail.

A coppery gleam behind the clouds was making him

anxious to be gone.

"And the whisky. We will hoch der Kaiser."

Anthony swept the four jars on to the shrouded hull. Martin had endured much. He now gave way. In tones of passion mixed with fear he cursed Jamesey for a fool.

As the Willy Wagtail swung clear, he denounced the

Germins as robbin' vilyins.

"The Devil damn the Kaiser that couldn't brew whisky or guns for himself," shrieked Martin, as he saw the last glimmer of his jars.

"Ich Lieber Dich. Blumchien. Geben mie eine

küsse," stormed Anthony.

"Hocheimer," roared Frank, and the Wagtail, darkly draped, scuttered out to sea, her engine throbbing.

At this last fusilade of German they could hear Jamesey in trembling tones begging Martin, for the love of God, to keep his tongue quiet; and Martin, in response, cursing every Kaiser that was bred on earth.

The Willy Wagtail stole out to sea and back to a sheltered creek, where, in silver moonlight, she was stripped of her dark drapery, her drain-pipe guns put into the sea, and then she popped and scuttered back to Castle Townshend, but not until the dawn was breaking pale across the sea.

The District Inspector at Drinmere was so impressed by the gravity of the matter, as reported by Martin,

that he sent for his superior.

The two listened to Martin's impassioned outburst

with judicial gravity.

The guns which he had given up Martin camouflaged as two useless old muskets which were not even good enough to give in to the police, but the note in his voice as he described their looting, made the County Inspector smile thoughtfully.

"Why didn't I make for help when I rowed in, sir? An' they promisin' to sink me little smack, an' the langidge they threw at me head. 'Ik leber Dick'; that,

I'd say, was a terrible threat."

The County Inspector, who was a German scholar, sat straighter, a gleam coming into his eyes.

"Can you remember any more?" he said softly.

"Hock Himer the second one was at, an' he very vexed," said Jamesey. "Dummy was a great word,

an' Koose, but that Leber Dick was what I'd recall most."

The County Inspector promised, with extreme gravity, that he would see these two wronged men righted.

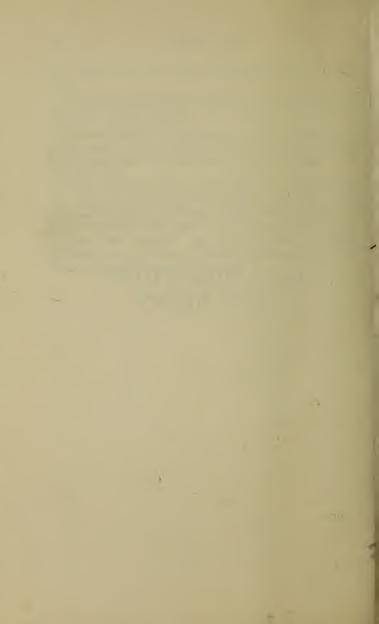
England would look to it.

Then he bicycled up to Castle Costello, where he met Frank, out shooting rabbits, and he looked thoughtfully at the gun, before he sat on a stone and laughed most

immoderately.

Frank Costello shot on happily with his favourite gun, which he put safely away when he came home; and Martin Keough is wont now, when talking politics, to remark bitterly that whatever the country was out for, to give him anythin' but them robbin', dhrunken Germins, with whisky at sixteen shillings a bottle, an' his little sthore all he had on earth.

# LORD HILLAYTON'S SETTLEMENT



## LORD HILLAYTON'S SETTLEMENT

ARGOT ERSTINE had acquired a reputation for being clever. She was a slightly-made, colourless maiden of twenty-seven, with a bright manner and a certain way of pursing her lips when anyone made a social mistake, which made her friends realise that Margot knew she would nevre "have done that." A flutter of sandy eyelashes and a little sneer; and by degrees the reputation was built up.

Margot always thought things out; she was careful to be sweet and very pleasant to desirable hostesses.

"Such a nice girl in a house," they said, "and quite

safe."

This implied that the eldest sons were not liable to be attracted by a well-born but almost penniless girl.

Margot's mother had a bright little flat, and Margot was well dressed, but it had leaked out that most of the Erstines' income came from an annuity to Mrs. Erstine.

And now at last Margot was engaged. She had proved her cleverness. Her fiance was small and podgy with a surprised expression in his eyes, which sometimes deepened now when he looked at Margot, but he was heir presumptive to Lord Hillayton, who was sixty and a confirmed bachelor.

Margot had planned little expeditions and meetings; she had planned the evening in the flat when mother was called out, and the proposal had been shaken from Fred.

Marayon.

She planned the honeymoon and the future, and, of course, no nicely brought up girl wants anyone to die . . . but she decided on silver tissue for her presentation dress when she was Lady Hillayton, and she had already thought of prospective tenants for the Scotch fishing:

they could pay visits in August.

Margot met her future uncle and gushed sweetly to him of her devotion to Freddie, her determination to be happy on their teeny weeny little income in a little flat somewhere near dear Freddie's clubs and things, and Harrod's for cheap shopping. "Go to live in the country!" Margot repressed a squeak of horror. "So dreadfully bad for a man unless he had lots of horses and so on—so depressing with all the people who were there shut away at five o'clock, and an extra maid to do lamps and grates."

"A flat would suit you best," said his Lordship grimly, He was really fairly generous to Freddie. He allowed him five hundred a year, and Freddie had seven of his own. This was completely out of kindness, but as Margot said for a man with an income of thirty thousand

it was mean.

"Darling Freddie, you may say he spends his income," said Margot sweetly; she was always just a little superior in her manner. "But—at sixty one ought not to want to spend it. Hunters, motors—I call it selfish when he knows that his heir must travel in a bus."

The preparations for the wedding went on smoothly. Margot spent blissful hours trying on frocks; rich relations, happily relieved of Margot's long visits and Margot's clever little letters asking so diffidently for help, sent cheques for frocks and frills. Margot was buying cautiously and cleverly. Good furs, laces, a few beautiful frocks.

"If you could lend me that lace blouse, dear Clare, for my little woman to copy. I could never afford to go to Jap for one like it."

Ten to one that dear Clare said," Take the thing,"

carelessly, "and have copies made. I've worn it once---"

Clever Margot got old lace from her Aunt Jennie, more from a distant cousin. She priced and contrived and mapped out, but there was a crumpled rose leaf.

She wanted the dearest of little houses close to Park Lane, a bijou maisonette sandwiched between stately neighbours. It was replete with electric lights and fires, with varieties of baths and two little conservatories. Margot knew how she would keep these filled by her uncle's gardeners. But the price was eighteen thousand pounds.

With an income of twelve hundred the house seemed a dream to everyone except Margot, and she relied

on her cleverness.

"If your uncle would only give it to us for a weddingpresent, Freddie," she said, "we should be rent free

for ever. Think of it."

Freddie was not at all sure that he liked the tiny ornate rooms on which you were brought up by the window immediately you shut the door; he said electric fires were dangerous, y'know. S'pose the current went astray, weren't there live wires and things like the Underground?

But Margot's heart was set on it and Freddie was clay

in the hands of the potter.

Margot's active brain worked, and suddenly as Margot

read a paper, Margot shrieked-she saw her way.

Freddie, who was feeling neglected, said, "Wasp or bee?" and as an afterthought, "Blue-bag either case;" but Margot merely replied, "Silly," as she seized his arm.

"Know any actresses, Freddie? Any actresses?"

she jerked out wildly.

Freddie replied "Course," with an injured air. At twenty-six not to know actresses was an allegation no man of the world could stand.

"Friends with any, Fred?"

Freddie grew cautious. He tried to make looks do

duty for words, he changed the surprised look for that

of the sly dog, and he smiled cryptically.

Margot said all men were alike, and he must know heaps. "They must have raced for you, dear," she said eagerly.

Freddie stiffened his short little neck.

"Knowing whose nephew you were. And of course for yourself." Margot saw her mistake immediately. "But look here, Freddie, darling. Oh, such an idea."

Margot held out the Daily Splendour, showing the headlines of a breach of promise case. Peer's son and

gaiety girl, claim for fifty thousand.

"If you had a real pal, Freddie . . You could give her a five hundred, in diamonds, of course. Oh, can't you

understand? Then listen."

Then clever Margot sat on Freddie's somewhat wobbly knee and unfolded her scheme, and Freddie gasped as he said he didn't like it, but by degrees he began to see. New Freddie did know an actress, quite well. She was a light in one of the musical comedies, and she was the daughter of a man near Hillayton Hall. Freddie had got her an introduction, he had helped her to settle down, and had asked her out to supper.

Estelle Ersmond—hername was Paxton—was grateful; she was a merry girl, tall and handsome, with a keen sense of humour. Margot danced with sheer delight.

But Miss Erstine disturbed her Freddie's diplomacy. She called on Miss Ersmond next day herself, and plunged into it with a cleverness which made the actress arch her eyebrows. Margot's gushing condescension was in her own opinion exact, right, also her sweet manner and clever explanations. After a little Miss Ersmond looked at Freddie, who was apparently cutting his teeth on his umbrella handle, and she laughed, a merry, ringing laugh.

"It's horribly mean," she said frankly.

Margot now arched her eyebrows because this was familiar, but she ran on as to Freddie's longing for the house, and their poverty and a man with millions a year,

so mean and hard to his heir. "Isn't he, Freddie?" Freddie endeavoured not to think of a three-figure cheque sent for his honeymoon which was in his pocket-book.

The interview was eventually successful. Clever Margot went away leaving Freddie writing laboriously at the actress's table, and Miss Ersmond dictating merrily.

though she still said that it was mean.

On the afternoon of the next day Miss Ersmond took a taxi and drove to Grosvenor Square. She sent in her card with "urgent "marked on it. She was shown into a cool room furnished with mellow Sheraton and Chippendale, and with sporting pictures adorning the walls. A tea-table was placed close to the open window.

Miss Ersmond began to look at the pictures of the

horses.

"Favourites of mine which I bring to town. I detest a conventional drawing-room in a bachelor's house."

Estelle turned to see a man of nearly sixty who didnot look fifty, his reddish hair only tinged with grey, his skin clear and firm. He had humorous grey eyes and a pleasant voice.

"I---" said Miss Ersmond startled. "Yes, I like

the bay."

"My best horse," said Lord Hillayton. "Irish, with old Victor blood in her. Ah, yes, Adams, tea for two. Now, Miss—yes—Ersmond, you wish to see me."

Estelle, very pink, begged him not to think of tea. She produced with decision two letters and handed them to her host, who read them without glasses. He turned

to the signature and sighed.

"I—never thought he had it in him," said Lord Hillayton almost proudly. "These are a man's letters. Freddie writing these! Dear me—you might have made a man of him too," he said regretfully.

Miss Ersmond gasped and sat down.

"A cup of tea," said Hillayton kindly. "Thanks, Adams, that will do. 1 presume," he went on, "you are showing these commercially." His voice hardened.

Estelle set her teeth as she nodded.

"Of the Gaiety," she said almost gruffly, "in the

Diamond Girl. You may have seen me."

"I-no-I go to Opera when I can get away from the House. Of the Gaiety? Yes. Freddie-Iam astounded."

"I want," said Estelle, trying not to falter, "twenty thousand for those letters. I shall get fifty in the

Courts,"

"Not from Freddie," said his uncle softly. "H'm! he's engaged to a sandy-haired society girl. H'm! Most of the newspapers would probably pay you to bring it on. He has treated you rottenly, Miss Ersmond judging by these."

A flicker of laughter came unbidden round Estelle's lips. She repressed it and looked at the horses, but she

knew it had been noted.

"You rode that bay," she said suddenly, "the long hunt from Constons Spinneys, four years ago. I short-cutted on my cob and saw you come in first to Winnermere."

"You like hunting!" said Hillayton, astonished.

"I have had one hunt on a really good horse," she answered. "A grey—lent to me. I come from near Hillayton—that brown has bad hocks, hasn't he? I've seen him, too."

The motor had waited for half an hour before they finished discussing the horses. Then Estelle looked at

her watch. She had to dine at half-past six.

There was something in her eyes which she tried to hide when she faced Lord Hillayton.

" I-came to blackmail you and you've treated me as

an ordinary visitor," she faltered.
"No," said Hillayton thoughtfully. "Never as that." "And-I-oh, bother Freddie!" she burst out with

a crinkled forehead.

"You would have made a man of him," said Freddie's uncle, "sent him out to get his podgy fat off. Well, well! I'll drive you back, Miss Ersmond, and there are some

carnations here fresh from the country, if you'd honour me by taking them."

The chauffeur remarked to the wheel that he was blest, as Miss Ersmond got into the car, and they hummed

past Hyde Park towards Kensington.

Lord Hillayton saw the Diamond Girl next night, and frowned thoughtfully. He was not fond of paint and feathers and display of limbs, but he applauded loudly when Estelle sang "Little Country Birdees" with a trill of feeling in her pretty voice.

"What a pity," said Freddie's uncle.

Ten days later clever Margot saw to the purchase of the little house; she also chose some showy but badly coloured diamonds at a shop near Charing Cross, and sent them to Miss Estelle Ersmond. She even asked Miss Ersmond to tea, to see the presents.

They poured in, glitter of their silver and softness of mother-of-pearl, and red radiance of mock antique furniture, but Margot pursed her lips when nothing came

from Freddie's uncle.

He wrote to say that he was called away, and could

not be at the wedding in September.

Margot's brow was puckered on her wedding-day because no present had arrived. She told her friends that she was to choose it with her dear uncle when he came back to Town, he was away now on his yacht. She hinted at a tiara, but she was nevertheless uneasy, and sent such a sweet letter telling of all her best gifts, and how she hoped to show them to her dear uncle in their tiny house which they had got for positively nothing. They would love some little pots of flowers for it from Hillayton, and so on.

Clever Margot and dull Freddie honeymooned in Paris, where it was rather chilly, and Margot did not understand French quite as well as she might have, so felt irritated when Freddie laughed immoderately at the theatres. Then they returned to London and the new

toy house.

It was only partly furnished, the air of unrest which

hangs over all new houses was upon it, the new maids were in difficulties with the electric contrivances, and Margot was a little worn by dinner-time.

Then she began to open a bundle of letters.

"One from my uncle," said Freddie, "and a cheque at last."

"Which I shall want so much," said Margot. "Freddie, don't say, 'by gum!' What is in, Freddie? Why do you look like an owl?"

"It's for £20—no, for £2,000."

"I say, Freddie."

She snatched the letter.

#### "DEAR FRED,

"I had not forgotten a wedding-present, as Margot seemed to hint; you see, I had really given you rather a handsome one, which I said nothing about. I enclose the letters written by you which I purchased. Perhaps you do not know that I was myself married in July to Estelle Ersmond; we come back to Hillayton in a week. Margot is so clever she will understand that I have now ties of my own, and with already expectations of an heir or heiress, I do not see my way to a permanent allowance. But I send £2,000, to make the sum given to you up to £20,000, as your final wedding-present. wasn't quite a nice trick to play, was it ?--yet it has made me a wonderfully happy man, and I must always thank clever Margot for it.

> " I remain, Your affectionate uncle, H."

"P.S.—Aunt sends her love."

Margot sat very still for a little.

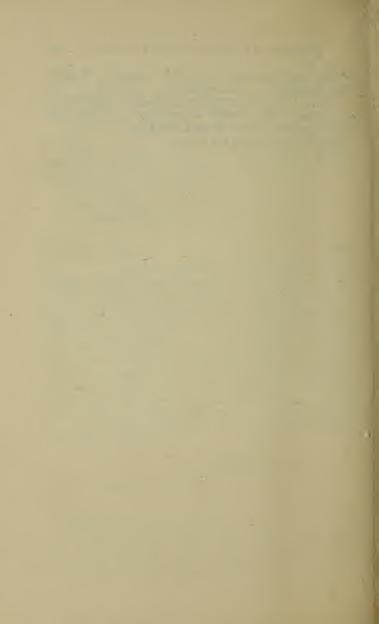
"We—shall have to sell this house," she said hysterically. "All your fault, Freddie, not showing your uncle those letters yourself. All your fault."
"Gwacious!" said Freddie. "Gwacious!"

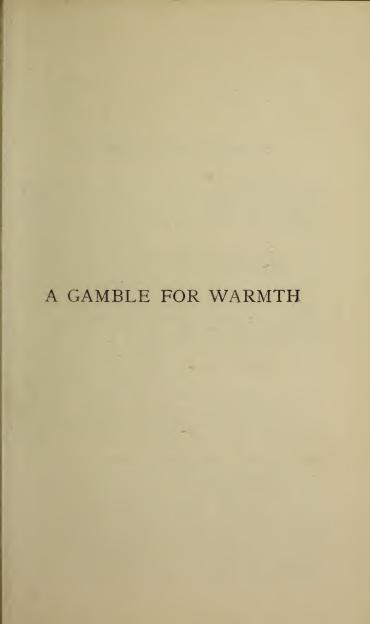
"All my cleverness wasted!" stormed Margot.

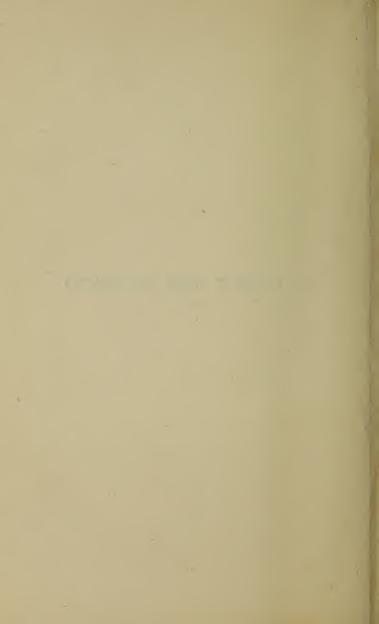
'My thought . . . you stupid."

"Don't believe we'll get ten thousand for this bandbox either," said Freddie cheerlessly. "I'll put the wedding-present away, Margot, carefully."

Margot had nothing left to say.







## A GAMBLE FOR WARMTH

B LEAK, bitter cold, riding on a north-east wind; lash of hail, and then a drive of half-melted sleet; and all the time a wind, which could not be kept out, a wind which made the cold physical pain in its intensity.

Men and women in warm coats and furs hurried from it into motors or shops, shivering as they hurried. The puddles on the pavements were icy; when the hail

ceased they crinkled in the grip of frost.

"Bruh! If one could be warm—warm for ten minutes."
Mark Deering, shabby loafer, shuddered the words
out. He was wet through; the icy water squelched in
his sodden boots; his thin coat was buttoned tightly
to hide the lack of a waistcoat.

"To be warm once," he muttered. "Lord! when a

man goes down, he goes down."

He had travelled from London to answer an advertisement, to try for a post on a country paper—vainly. The rolling stone had gathered an evil lichen in its passage down-hill. One step had set it going on its course.

So cold that cold did not matter. Deering stood dreaming on the pavement. He dreamt of warmth; of days when he had sat in a comfortable office, with fires to keep circulation going; well clothed, clean. His heart ached for a deep hot bath. His was a sordid, ordinary story. A clerk, in a good firm, employed by Frances Brothers, a hard-working young fellow, so well connected, so well recommended, that he knew he was put there with a junior partnership in view. And then jealousy, gnawing at the fabric of his life; a girl's careless

fancy won away from one of his employers, who was a widower with one son; coldness which he laughed at inwardly; a slip and its consequences. Going racing without a day's leave, and given money to pay away in the morning—young Deering had forgotten to cash a cheque. He borrowed, paid in ten pounds short, said thoughtlessly that it was an oversight, that he would bring it next day. Fate sent Francis Elliot across the man who ought to have been paid in full. Fate left Mark Deering for the night at Newmarket with a broken arm. He came back a marked man, an embezzler, untrustworthy, a being to be dismissed in disgrace, even expected to give gratitude for mercy. Frances did not spare the boy who had crossed him.

Mentally bruised and sore, Mark had turned to his love, to meet fresh scorn there. Miss Greatorex was not at home to Mr. Deering; wrote him a cruel, callous note

of dismissal; and eventually married Elliot.

With a stone about one's neck it is easy to sink. Mark Deering knew it now. The man who had wiped the dust of injustice from his feet was now a sodden wastrel, a poor creature who had tried to work and found his brand of shame an ever visible thing. No office would take him; he tried journalism; the big newspaper offices found him out. He had attempted everything—and failed.

Now he would journey back to London, soaked, chilled, empty—he had grown too used to hunger to feel it greatly—in a third-class which the stuffiness made more intense. He must keep his last shilling for a bed and the "cawfee and slice" called breakfast; and look next day for some job by which he might earn another. If there was none—Mark shrugged his thin shoulders drearily; there was always the right to die and so forget the cold

Yet life was strong in his starved body; he feared the

thing he did not know of.

A big motor glided to the footpath, its hood up, the back seat packed with luggage. A tall man getting out turned to the chauffeur.

"Take her to a garage, Gustave, and put the petrol in, and see to that loose nut. I'll go in and get a cup of coffee here; then we'll go on to Stannerly. You've looked out the way, I hope."

Pulling off a big fur coat, the man strolled into the

restaurant.

Gustave the chauffeur enquired in indifferent English

for a garage.

Mark had seen the sign up in a side street. He directed the man. He did not know that this was a youthful garage, but half built, and that a better place was at the end of the High Street.

The big car glided on. Its owner, after a few minutes, came impatiently to the door of the restaurant to look

for it, and spoke to Mark.

"Hi, there! did you see a car?" he questioned. "It's gone to the garage, you say. Run and hurry, like a good man, if you know the place, and I'll give you something. Come back in it."

Mark smiled. He looked a loafer who would run

errands.

Mark hurried away, more for good nature than because he thought of taking the money. The big, luxurious car was standing silent in the street; the place was dimly lighted, and a vacuous youth was emptying tins of petrol into the tank.

Tell the chauffeur, will you, to hurry? To come out

at once!"

"Yes, sir." The petrol pourer recognised a gentleman's voice; he went into the shop. Mark peered into the car. It was warm at the back, and the big fur coat lay on the seat. He had been told to come back in the car. With a laugh he got out of the whip of the wind, just as Gustave reached the door.

"All right, sah, I go," said Gustave, nipping up. The S.C.A.T.T. owned a self-starter, and throbbed swiftly into life. Mark Deering huddled down among the rugs with his icy feet on a hot-water tin, blessing the shelter.

Then suddenly he saw they were flitting through the

town, and not back to the restaurant. The lights gave place to the open country, and the storm beat against them.

Mark stood up, realising what had happened. Gustave had jumped to the conclusion that his master had got

in, and was going on to his destination.

Mark got up to stop him, when the long day told: he reeled back, sick, giddy, half-conscious, quite unable to speak. Feebly, he struggled into the fur coat to keep warm, lay back blue-lipped and gasping, numb and powerless. The icy chill, the long day's exposure had been too much for him.

They were flying up a wide avenue when he caught grip of his senses, the lighted windows of a house just in front, and Mark thought grimly of what he would hear when he struggled out of the car and told his tale. He felt better now.

The car stopped. Someone ran down the steps, pulled

the door open.

"Come out, my dear Henderson. We were getting anxious. Come along, and get warm. You've never met any of us, and I'm sorry Frank could not come."

Muffled in the fur coat, his own soft hat pulled down

over his face, Mark was almost pulled out.

"Come to the warmth-it's arctic. Send the man round."

Gustave was sitting woodenly, his hand ready on the

levers. He did not look round.

That "Come to the warmth" undid Mark. He had never met any of them. They did not know him. Why not get warm for half an hour?

"Bad luck, your man being laid up, too. Hudson, take Sir Anthony's things-my man will look after you."

So the chauffeur was not his valet, and would not come in to betray him. Mark walked up the steps, his eyes on a stove glowing red in a comfortable hall. A fresh storm of sleet made the night a horror of blackness. Come what might, he would get warm for an hour. In happier days Mark had been a humorist: his eyes twinkled now.

"You're perished. You look worn out. Will you come into the drawing-room, or have something hot in your room?"

Mark decided on his room-decisively. He was afraid they might see his boots. He had not the faintest

idea whom he was speaking to.

The warmth almost hurt in its luxury, the softness of thick rugs under icy feet, the glow of the roaring fire. He took a glass of cherry brandy to bring back strength to his failing heart. With a reckless grin, he hoped Sir Anthony Henderson's clothes would fit him.

Then a thought struck him with a crisp chill of fear.

"Got a telephone here from the town?" he asked.
"A telephone? Yes—put up lately. Hudson will take you to it. I'll see to hot coffee for you : you look quite ill."

"A genial, old-fashioned host, looking after his guests

himself.

The telephone was in a small room. With a smile, Mark Deering took off the receiver, and asked the butler suddenly to see if a certain purple case had been forgotten.

"No man is likely to have a purple case," he said thoughtfully, as he quite omitted to ring up, and also to put the receiver back in its place. When he left

he switched the light off.

"Let the worst happen, I shall be warm for an hour,"

he said.

He was nervously afraid that they might see his boots, the cheap patched things which squelched about his feet. He was taken to a chintz hung room, fresh and sweet, a big fire roaring in a steel grate, a bed ready for a weary man.

With something that was close to a sob, the outcast held his hands to the blaze. Hudson was discreetly distressed as to the missing purple case.

The chauffeur would not see him till the morning . . .

let the rest be.

Hudson had already unpacked the bags and laid out a

thange. "Bath-room off this, sir," he said, opening a

loor; "one to every three rooms here, sir."

Quickly Deering pulled off his sodden clothes, his shabby boots, shoved them into a drawer, and turned the key; took up with qualms of doubt his borrowed plumes. The man must be almost his height and size; he saw the coat before he went to his bath and turned the steaming water on.

"This," said Mark Deering, "is heaven." Heaven to feel the lap of the hot water, to smell good soap; to come out, with the blood astir in his numbed limbs, and find a tray by his fire. Hot coffee, toast, a bottle of

liqueur.

Deering drank the coffee and laughed. This hour was worth a week of prison. He shaved with Sir Anthony Henderson's safety razor; he saw himself, tall, cleanly made, cleanly bred, with a perfectly made dress coat setting a little loosely on his thin shoulders, with Sir Anthony Henderson's well-chosen links and studs adorning a glossy white shirt.

"If I had the right again," Deering muttered, his

lips twisting. "Well, what matter! I'm warm."

Hudson, returning, commenced to make decorous search for the wet clothes and boots, to the accompaniment of a discreet silence of the guest.

"Mr. Elliot, sir, wishes to see you."

Deering started as if he had been stung. Elliot had been his employer's name. Now he remembered that the man who had caused him to be dismissed had

a brother living close to Blackminster.

Deering smiled a little. The world was a curious one, but it was warm. The air in the passage was warm; the flickering glow of blazing fires came from half-open doors. For two hours' warmth he would play the play to its last line.

Mr. Elliot waited in the library. Looking round it, Deering saw that curtains hid a door into another room; the man-servant pulled them to more closely before he went out.

What next? Deering stood near a great glowing fire, he listened to the crackling pelt of hail against the windows, listened and shivered; and yet his eyes twinkled a little.

"It was too bad Frank's being unable to get away." Elliot spoke a little nervously. "Come, Sir Anthony, we'd better run over the matter now."

Mark said, thoughtfully, that it would be better.

"You know so much depends on you," Elliot got, as it were, into his stride, "everything. Vera is waiting for your opinion. Even if we've never seen you, she thinks so much of you. Her brother, you know, swore by your lightest breath. Come, Henderson, if my brother's boy has sinned, he has repented. The matter's not public yet. We believe you could stop this Richardson's mouth."

Francis Elliot's son! Mark looked into the fire—And he was here to plead for him! He laughed again, softly, to himself.

"It was a mad act—a boy's folly. Shall we go over

it ? "

Then, listening, Mark heard how this boy, Frank Elliot, had borrowed money from some funds, which he held for a college entertainment. How, kept absolutely short by his father, he had been found short of twenty pounds, and had to write to his uncle for it. How Richardson, his enemy, threatened to call it theft, and

to expose young Elliot.

"It's a cobweb—a tissue," Elliot thundered, "but Vera is honour's soul. She knows, can see no excuse. My brother's heart—mine—is set on this match coming off. We thought of you...she has promised to forgive him if you speak for him. Tell her how carelessly he slipped; how straight a fellow he's been at Cambridge; how much you've seen of him. A first offence—a boy's folly."

Dimly across the gulf of the bitter years, Mark heard his own voice pleading in those very words to Francis

Elliot. And now . . .

"Vera Delany's wealth is fabulous; the business totters; it means everything if she provides this money."
"Oh, you here, Gardy?"

A girl came into the room, a tall girl, with a small proud face, with proud grey eyes and mutinous curved red lips, scarlet against the soft pallor of her skin.

"You and Sir Anthony," she said with her hand

outstretched.

Love at first sight; some strange sympathy of soul to soul; of mind to mind. As Mark Deering, outcast. wastrel, impostor, met the searching glance of the grey eyes he knew that he had met the one being he could and must love. He held her hand, forgot to let it go, until the colour rose in her creamy cheeks and her eyes dropped.

"It was good of you to come," she said, a little un-

steadily.

"I'll leave you two." Elliot hurried out of the room which held this girl. It was well to make believe, to dream that Mark Deering was once more a gentleman, who might stand in peace, and not shoulder for his corner of a fire in a shelter, or shiver in his miserable lodging. It was his hour. He laughed recklessly, and with the grim humour at the back of his brain.

"We'll talk of Frank after dinner," he said, "when

I know you better."

He saw hereves light at his audacity. She sat down,

smiling.

"You are very young for your age," she said lightly So for half an hour they talked, and with each word grew into old friends and not new acquaintances. Once, touching on the storm outside, he told how the poor lived, and how cold was their worst fear and enemy. Cold which hurt, raw cold, damp cold, aching in sodden feet. Cold in a hard bed. Cold when one had eaten in a reeking room and went out to the streets once more.

She listened, with her proud eyes growing kind, her

red lips softening.

"You talk as one who has felt it," she said.

Sir Anthony, I do not wonder now that men steal for the means to be warm."

"They do more than that . . . sometimes," he said

drily.

When the gong boomed they were talking eagerly;

they heard it impatiently.

Mr. Elliot came in with another girl; a pretty, curly-headed child of eighteen, who was visibly conscious of her pink and white skin, her blue eyes and graceful figure.

With a little inward smile Mark realised that this Miss Stannard thought herself the beauty, Vera almost plain.

He hoped he would eat decorously. White damask, crisp rolls, the gleam of silver and scent of flowers, went to his head like wine.

Outside the hail lashed the sodden earth, and there

was the cold he must go back to.

Restraint made him take small helpings, try not to look too longingly at a dish of tiny cutlets, to dally with his slice of turkey, because once finished he might never see turkey again. It was a simple dinner, beautifully cooked.

Afraid of champagne, Mark took whisky and Perrier, but his glass of good port gave him fresh courage for his mad adventure.

Vera Delany sat opposite him, her grey eyes shining softly, her red mouth relaxed to softness. Lettice Stannard chattered beside him, girl's chatter, with merry side glances flung up at her unheeding partner, and little pouts when she found they were not noticed.

Nine! The clock on the mantel-shelf chimed it out softly. He could scarcely hope for the spell of madness

to endure for the night.

"I'll wait in the library," Vera said. "You'll find me there."

Mark went to find her standing by the fire, holding out her slender white hands to it, shivering a little at the chill of the night. And he . . . must go soon out into it again in his thin, damp clothes.

"Now talk to me of Frank," she said imperiously. "Afterwards we have the evening for other things."
"Was that a motor?" he lifted his head, listening.

"No-only the storm. No motor is likely to come here to-night. Come, Sir Anthony, I am too particular, they tell me. I hold that funds which do not belong to you are sacred things—that Frank will only meet his reward if his folly is exposed; but you, they say you know him so well . . . and my brother thought your word law, Sir Anthony."

He was there to plead for a weak, foolish boy, for the son of the man who had ruined him. If he spoke evil things they would cling and live as evil things do; even with the coming of the real Sir Anthony this girl would not forget them; she see-sawed between forgiveness and contempt. Her money meant everything to a tottering

house of business; but a boy wanted help.

He drew a long breath; looked hard at the pale little face set so proudly; at the grey eyes of the one woman he would love for all time. Then he spoke—these people trusted him; he would do his part. He pleaded, not for the absent boy, but for youth, for youth's folly, for vouth's carelessness.

He told his own story. Of another boy who had slipped, and had rolled to oblivion because no brake of forgiveness was set against the wheels of his life. He pleaded

eloquently as though he knew his enemy's son.

Once Vera interrupted him. "You are so much younger than I thought you were, and you look so kind,"

she said. "Well, go on—I am listening."
"I've finished," Deering said. He grew suddenly tired, cold even in the warm room; the whole thing had tired him out. He had said all he could for youth and youth's folly; he could see how it would end. White satin, wedding favours; the slender, proud bride making her vows.

Vera laid her fingers on his coat sleeve. "I have someone to speak to-I'll come back," she said gently. "Wait for me here."

Mark Deering threw some logs on the fire; the curtains stirred behind him. A young dark boy hurried in. It was over. Elliot's son was unmistakably like his father. Deering's thin jaw set; he remembered the boy as a child.

"You! What does it mean? Who are you?" Young Francis stared, slack-jawed. "I don't understand. I overheard, you know, in there. I was getting a drink and some sandwiches. Who are you, and why

did you plead so hard for me-a stranger?""

"Not for you—for youth," Deering said quietly, "for

my own ghost."

"Come in here." Young Francis pushed aside the curtains, going into the little room Deering had pretended

to telephone from. The receiver was still off.

"Fairy tales," said Deering calmly, "are curious things. Listen to mine." He told his story from its beginning in the town.

Young Francis listened very carefully. Behind his

weakness lay some shrewd sense and kindness.

"I've heard my father talk of a man called Deering. You talked as if you had felt the story you were telling about the other young fool who erred. Are you by chance that Deering?"

"That Deering whom your father ruined," Mark

answered drearily. "Yes."

"And you did your best for me to-night. . . . Why?"

"For youth—not for you," Mark shot out. "To lose a girl like that one might drive a strong man to the devil. I spoke for the memory of what I suffered. Come, it's time for me to get out . . . into the cold, if you'll let me go quietly."

Frank Elliot sat down and muttered that he was blowed. Also that he could not imagine why Sir Anthony

had not rung up.

"If you'd look at the telephone-" said Deering

politely.

Young Frank replaced the receiver, to be almost immediately called up. An indignantly irate voice said

it was trying once again as a last hope, and seemed surprised to receive an answer. The disappearance of his chauffeur and car, the impossibility of hiring a motor in Littlehampton, was rasped over the wires. "I waited for two hours for my fellow," almost wailed Sir Anthony. "Then I looked for a car-couldn't get one."

Frank Elliot gazed plaintively into the mouthpiece.

He looked at Deering.

"Tell him his car is here—that you'll send it for him at once. That there is a complete explanation. And now-I came here to get warm-let me go quietly, will vou?"

"Out into that?" young Elliot muttered, listening

to the storm.

The wind was rising, howling gustily; pulling back the curtains one could see the ground was white with hail and sleet.

"Out into that," Deering said grimly. "I have been warm for a few hours. I chanced it all for that.

I can slip away."

They went up to the bright room where Sir Anthony's pyjamas were toasting by the fire, and Sir Anthony's thick dressing-gown hanging across a chair. Deering pulled out clothes which were clammy with damp; he looked at his sodden, patched boots. He got into them, feeling their bitter chill.

"I'll lend you an overcoat. You must let me. You can return it when your own is dry," Elliot said. "And I'll drive you to the station. I'm not altogether a brute."

Mark slipped down to wait in the little room behind the library. His adventure was over, and he could not even say good-bye; but the memory of a small pale face, of proud lips, and deep grey eyes, would be with him through the cold.

The curtains parted. Vera came in. "So," the girl said, "you are a vagrant, an impostor? I came back and listened as you talked to Frank."

"This is a dangerous room," Mark answered gravely.
"Yes, for impostors—for——"She came forward

quickly. . . . "For poor souls who dread the cold. I've heard my guardian say, Mr. Deering, how hardly they treated you. And with all that, you did your best for me about Frank."

"Not about Frank—about youth and intolerance," he answered in a tired voice. "You'll marry him, then. See how little it was. . . . I spoke with a fellow feeling.

you see."

She laughed. "I never dreamt of marrying him. I'd promised to lend him a big sum of money to start his business afresh, and in time to marry Lettice. After this I said I would not give it. There was no thought of my marrying the boy.'

"Oh!" And nothing could stop the glad flash which

leapt into Deering's eyes as he looked at her.

The girl flushed faintly; stood as one in a dream.

"And now—good-bye," he said.

"Will you forgive
me my gamble to get warm?... I couldn't resist it.
You heard me tell the fairy tale."

"If you would like to keep warm—that is, generally," a glimmer of laughter lit her grey eyes, "I've a place in Worcestershire, and my head man's leaving. I want to run it properly. Prize cows-flowers-and so on. You'll do it for me, will you?"

Mark sat down suddenly. "But any pig could fool me," he said, trying to keep his voice steady. "And as

for a cow . . .

"Please try. You'll go to London, leave me your address; the day after to-morrow you'll travel to Beech End, and find everything ready. I go down often myself

-in fact, I live there.'

"But-but-" Deering got up again, "I am a failure, a vagrant, a one-time thief. Have you realised." his jaw shot out, "that if I am there I shall see you, often-and if I meet you . . ."

"I have realised that," she answered steadily, an answering light in her eyes. "And perhaps . . . that is why I ask you to go there."

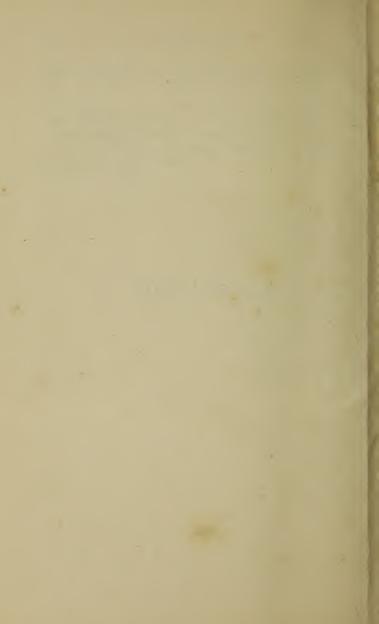
Mark Deering took her hands in his, held them for a

minute, and knew that Fate had led him to a path where he could walk on to a greater warmth than fire could give.

"I shall give you your expenses—Frank will," said Miss Delany formally, as young Elliot came in. "And a change of boots. Get some, Frank." Mark went out by a back door into the bitter night, but

he had left sorrow behind him, and the hail had lost its power to sting.

## MEAVE'S RIDE



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REY clouds billowed and eddied over a back ground of pallid blue; sometimes their edges were softened to pearl, with lights of silver and gold through the white; sometimes they met and massed and lowered greyly and ran more slowly

before the sobbing wind.

Cahircullane Castle looks down across a stretch of green park-land, with gnarled old trees standing too thickly in it, to wide tracts of bog and rock and on to where the Cullane river runs between it and the distant Murvoe Hills. Peace itself seemed to live in the soft evening light, in the uneven whisper of the west wind as it whistled through the new-clothed trees, in the calm of the wild country, the quiet of the big terraced house.

The castle seemed to stand asleep, until voices rose from the stables, with clatter of buckets and the sough of a pump at work, and then slept again until fresh voices, low and ill-humoured, broke from a batch of straggling, unclipped laurels beyond the sunk fence.

"If he dares to do it I tell ye we will do for him; thim

days is done with, they is done-"

"He says that he will have me out—that Miss Meave

wants the place for her dogs."

"It will be onhealthy for the dogs," Marty Connell said grimly. "As 'tis but a handle he is making of Miss Meave's name. A handle, Mike Malone—"

Two sturdy country fellows crouched in the laurels, evidently escaping observation. Big, good-tempered looking men, children at heart, easy to lead and manage, save when the land-hunger touched them. Driven on

by the all-powerful League, led as the children they

were, their rights must not be touched.

Sir Shamus O' Neill had not sold his big estate. He was old-fashioned, liked to hold the reins of power in his fingers, and even with the Leagues urging them, his tenants hung back, making no effort to buy. Sir Shamus might swear at them, ride recklessly where he chose, insist on his rents, but if a bad year came he knew how to help them; if a small farmer's cow died the steward at the castle would have orders to replace it. He bought hay and straw and oats lavishly, he lived as his fathers had done—lord of his land, but always generous, and he gave open warning that once he was no longer landlord his days of help were done with.

"When I am gone, Meave can sell," he said. "She'd

only muddle it all-"

And now there was trouble. Sir Shamus, in ill-health, had gone away for a sea-voyage. Meave O'Neill stayed at the castle with a meek aunt as chaperon, and her cousin, Peter Barry, the agent, found out that it

was not so easy to keep things going.

Mike Malone, a ne'er-do-well tenant, who held a cottage on the banks of the Cullane, had not paid his rent for years; sometimes he came smilingly with a pound or two, sometimes he did not. Miss Meave had started otter hounds, and she wanted the cottage for herself to camp out in; there were outhouses which could be turned into kennels; the cottage was stout and comfortable. Malone never paid and Malone must go. . . .

"And I tell you there will be trouble, Meave, and you

are foolish."

Fresh voices breaking the silence now as two people came out on the terrace.

The watchers in the laurels crouched low.

"And I tell you I shall do as I choose, Peter, and you will have the sheriff, and send Mike packing. I've offered him money. I've done all I can, and I want the house——"

Fair-skinned, grey-eyed, youthfully imperious, Meave O'Neill was a spoilt child to her finger-tips. Peterloved her: he would have been stone and not man if he had hunted, fished, and played tennis with her for two years and not done so. Meave condescended to like him, and to promise to marry him-some day.

"Very well." Peter smoked a pipe philosophically. "I obey your order. I've had no answer from Sir Shamus, and he left you in charge. They'll shoot me, no doubt, and then you'll come and weep over me at Moyarta and be sorry. You may keep Diver."

Diver was the nondescript beast whose forefathers had alliances with water spaniels and retrievers, while his nearer relatives would seem to have been terriers. But his eyes were liquid brown and all the intelligence of varied races seemed to have concentrated behind them.

"They are talkin' about meself," Mike muttered; the crouching men were too far off to hear what the others were saying. "Look at her pinting out beyant—to me

house."

Meave O'Neill's pointing finger wavered across an area which might have represented several miles of country, but Mike believed it was focussed on his particular cottage.

Diver put his silky head against his master's hand,

and Meave laughed scornfully.

"I shall pay the man," he said. "Hennessy's little house is empty, and we don't mind getting no rent for that." Peter sighed with marked resignation; he made a quotation concerning fools and angels, and his cousin, with heightened colour, retaliated with something about cowards—just as the butler brought tea into the library.

Mr. Peter Barry's temper was far from being angelic; he got up with ominous calmness, and did not improve it by an absent-minded gulp of scalding tea, which had

no sugar in, and he liked it sweet.

Miss Eva O'Neill was out driving; she adored paying calls. Presently, after a prolonged pause, Peter said

that he really believed Meave cared far more about her childish whim of the cottage than she did about any danger which he, Peter, might run into-and he might have known that no girl of twenty could possibly overlook the word "childish." They had reached the stage of stony and bitter politeness when old Dayly, the butler, came in with another relay of hot cakes. just to tell ye, Mister Peter, that there's black work on foot," he almost whispered. "Let Mike Malone be, sir; he comes of a wild stock. He was over to the town but yesterday, and I heard tell he was buyin' catheridges."

"If he's a bad lot we shall be well rid of him,"

scoffed Meave, "that's all; it helps things."

Dayly put down his cakes with the sapient remark that it was very ugly to put ye'r hand in a wild bee's nest—and that he wished the masther was back again.

"He havin' sense," said Dayly regretfully. He still oked on Meave as a baby. "Sure, ye cannot put ould looked on Meave as a baby.

heads on to young shoulders."

"If you are not careful, Dayly, I shall send you out with Mike Malone," stormed Miss O'Neill fiercely.

To which old Dayly said, "Aisy, missy," very

soothingly, and without the faintest emotion.

"To-morrow, then," Peter got up, "I shall see about this business, and finally warn Malone; those are your orders, Meave-you prefer your own way to

anything else."

Meave burst out that she certainly did, that she was mistress in her father's absence, and would do as she chose, and she finished up by further hints as to cowardly people not dealing with the Irish or taking up agencies.

"Mike Malone and Marty Connell is outside to see yer

honour," announced Dayly, coming back.

The men could not have come at a worse time.

Meave sat and fumed while Peter interviewed, to stroll back presently with his face quietly set.

"Malone quite understands now," he said coldly.

"He has had all the grace that is possible, and I shall go to Cullane to-morrow to settle with Keogh, for Malone says he won't go quietly; that is all . . ."

Not quite all; he stood waiting, foolish enough to

expect sense from a thoroughly vexed girl.

"And—if you insist upon this," he said, after a pause, "on my obeying orders as merely agent and servitor,

that is all I shall be for the future, Meave."

It ended in one of those foolish quarrels of youth: in Meave telling him that he could do as he chose, and rolling an emerald ring across the table, and promising to send back everything else; and in Peter's flying out of the house, swearing he would never come into it again; and in Miss Meave watching him go with her head very high, and telling herself proudly that she was simply delighted to be rid of him, delighted—and at the third "delighted" in her putting her head on the table and sobbing bitterly to show her joy.

At this point Aunt Eva entered with the annoying quietness of light-footed spinsters, and Meave had to

explain.

"A wasp stung me," flung out Miss O'Neill fiercely, on the face—it hurts."

"A wasp? My poor child! But it is only May," said Miss O'Neill a minute later, as she scurried to the kitchen for the blue-bag and some soda-"wasps in May . . . how odd. . . .

Still, the remedies cured Meave, but affected her appetite, and she ate no dinner; and the wind had risen, sobbing round the old castle, bringing splatters of rain

against the window panes.

Halfway through dinner Miss Eva asked for Peter; at ten o'clock she noticed that the emerald no longer gleamed on Meave's finger.

"I might have known," said Sir Shamus's sister

wisely, "that there were no wasps in May."

Next day the clouds had rolled away, the world was sunlit, with a keen wind blowing coolly, the thorn bushes were puffs of powder scattered on emerald turf, the tall tulips in the garden flared gaudily in the sunshine. It was a day to love life, but Meave O'Neill, aged only twenty, called it cold and dark and horrible, and could not find anything to do which pleased her. She could not ride her big blood horse. Bargate was exercised by Ted, the only boy he allowed on his back. In the afternoon Meave drove towards the river, and saw Mike Malone planting cabbages as if he never meant to stir.

Meave's Sunbeam was a source of danger to dogs and carts as she let it out going home; the chauffeur set his teeth more than once as they whizzed round bends, but being Irish, he hoped not to die before his time came. As they reached the avenue a back tyre went off with a whish, and the spare wheel had scarcely been adjusted when the second tyre banged furiously.

Dickson got out for the second time, peering at the

a venue.

"Playin' games here with glass, miss," he announced significantly; "the place is covered with broken bottles."

Two tyres were gashed to ribbons—a third was not likely to survive; there was nothing for it except to crawl to the yard and do repairs next day. Dickson was going home that evening for his sister's wedding, so the

repairing would be delayed.

Meave walked home in a bad humour. She was restless, ill at ease. All day she had listened for the thrum of a motor-bicycle or the crunch of a horse's feet—she had wailed for Peter, passed from the stage of being prepared to receive him haughtily to that of abject

contrition, or to resentment again.

Her aunt was dining out. Meave saw the brougham depart with the twenty-year-old carriage horse prancing down the avenue as if he were but four; then she ordered her own dinner to be put back until nine, and went out. A clear chill twilight held the May evening. It would be moonlight early, with black shadows and silver lights ghostlike across the park. Meave turned

into the woods, where the high wall looked down on to the road. If Peter came she would hear the thrum of the motor, and rush back to the house through the trees to stroll down from her room as though she had never thought of him.

Two men came slouching along the road. She drew back, hiding in the branches which overhung the wall. They stopped close to her. She heard the splutter of a match, and, peering, saw Mike Majone and his friend

Connell.

"And so faix he'll pay to-night," Mike said.

Meave caught the boughs so that they rustled. Her heart seemed beating in her throat.

"Ye are not afraid, Mike, o' bein' cot?"

"Won't Mike Malone be in his house in another hour, and yourself with him for all to see, an' he fivin' off his guns for the neighbours to hear?—an' besides," the man's voice dropped to a fierce whisper, "there is no shootin' in it; a broken neck tells no tales."

A broken neck! Frozen, holding her breath, Meave

looked down.

"He will be late out. He towlt his man he would dine to-night with Doctor Flannogan. Tom and Mack'll have the rope out ready where the two threes sthands up before the bog and the turn is suddint. If Pether Barry turns out more poor men after that 'twill be a quare sthory, the pace he rides."

They were going to rope the way, to catch the bicycle as it flew along the lonely road. Meave could see it—the figure flung on the hard stones, bruised and broken, if not dead. And—she knew now—the man she had mocked at and quarrelled with was all the world to her.

She could save him in the car; then, with a sob, she remembered that the car was useless, and Dickson away. The horses! A man could gallop. The only horse was her own Bargate, and the boy who could ride him slept two miles away from the castle.

"They're sayin' 'tis Miss Meave's fault, that hidin' he is," she heard the voices again. "He has a shpite

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agin' meself ever since he cot me gettin' a few robbits up here, and I spoke short to him. Come on; we shud be

home. The pony cart is above at the forge."

The voices and steps died away. White-faced, terror-stricken, Meave stepped away towards the house. The path had never seemed so long; the boughs caught at her, her feet slipped on uneven places, the avenue had surely doubled its length; and she looked behind, afraid that the men might have heard her.

The castle stood grey against the moonlight, its bulk

quiet and massive.

"Miss Meave, ye were running. Asthore, what is

Dayly forgot the child had grown up as he saw the girl, scratched, drawing sobbing breaths, run up the steps. "Dayly, it's Peter. Quick, come to the stables;

they're killing him."

Some portions of the story were gasped out as Meave rushed to the stables. The coachman was out; saddles, straps, girths were enchanted things, hiding themselves away. Bargate sidled and lashed out at them, resenting disturbance. A bit was crammed between his unwilling teeth, and he was led out in the worst of tempers. Twice he plunged away from the mounting block, kicking irritably; then, as in her ordinary dress Meave landed in the saddle, the big clock above the archway chimed a quarter past eight. It was nine miles to the bog road which led from Dr. Flannagan's house to Peter's, barely five across the fields. Meave set her teeth, and determined to go across country.

Bargate humped his great back as he clattered over the stones; then as his feet fell on the cool grass outside the swing gate he plunged and flung light-heartedly, reaching out into a raking canter. With a thrill of dismay Meave realised that the horse had a light snaffle in his mouth, and not the long bit she rode him in. She steadied him with difficulty at the stout gates, called to

the woman there to open the one opposite.

"Miss Meave, where are ye goin' to so late? Ye will be hurted."

"I will not, Bridget. I must not be."

The hill rose before her cold and shadowy, black bars showing the high, narrow banks. Meave steadied the great horse up the steep rise, felt her heart thump as they came at the first ghostly fence. Bargate had never refused. With a snort, his ears perched forward, his strong quarters humped—he was over with a scramble. Meave knew the small place here, near the gorse, but further on she must ride blindly at the wide banks, and ride fast if she was to be in time. Faster than she wanted to, when the great hill seemed to fall away into a sea of silver. Bargate, maddened by the dewy night, stretched himself recklessly. Through meadows, high and fragrant, over sprouting corn. Cows sprang away from them; the pair were as phantom horse and rider fleeting through the elusive light.

Danny Heggarty, staggering home to his longsuffering wife, stood cursing himself frantically, when, as he described it, a black horse spoutin' fire from his nose galloped through the air over the finces, with a devil in white crooked up on his back—and twice it called him be

name.

Which was true, for Meave had shouted at him to get out of the way.

"Never another drop," said Danny, "or the next time

I'd be whipt up behind the rider."

How many times Bargate nearly missed his active feet Meave dared not think of. The big brute seemed untirable as he flew on. Black shadows which she knew to be wide ditches slipped beneath them; twice she heard the twang of wire. She steadied the horse in deep, churning ground. They were down in the hollow now, with the bog road not half a mile away. There were huge ditches here with crumbling banks, difficult to jump in the daytime; horrors, as a wedge of black across the silver plain.

They landed into a field of plough-hedges ran all

round—with posts which spoke of wire flickering white on the bank. There was no other way out. Meave knew the field, and the gate at the end. She galloped to it, Bargate pulling hard. It was, of course, shut. If she got down she might never climb up again. If she had to run she might be too late; yet could any horse clear these five black bars out of a rutty track in the elusive, treacherous light?

She was answered. Bargate had got his wind. He raked his head away and sailed to the gate with a snort. Took off too soon, dashed against the top bar, landed on his knees, lay, rolled, and was up again—without a

fall.

Mr. Andrew Clancy never knew what smashed his

gate in the night.

Meave could see the road now. She rode carefully, found a broken-down spot in the boggy bank fencing it, and wheeled on to the broad strip of grass which ran between the road and the bog ditches. Bargate's great stride ate up the yards. He flung himself on, glorying in his own pace. Far off, through the rush of air, Meave heard the throb of a motor.

Two crouching figures heard it also, and with it the

pound of the hoofs.

"There is a loose horse come; run out an' beckon at him," one whispered. The rope was taut across the road, a short way from the ground, carefully tied to trees at both sides. They meant to take it away, and leave no trace where Peter lay smashed on the hard stones. Throb, throb; Meave heard it, coming fast. She lost her head in an agony of sheer terror. If the two were farther off than she thought, the throb might stop any moment, the murderous rope do its work, and she would be the real murderer.

"I shall have killed him!" muttered Meave. "Oh.

I shall have killed him."

Something darted out of the shadows waving its hands. Her hunting crop, held ready, swished across a man's face, left a red wheal there, and fell on Bargate's

shoulder. His long, easy gallop was as a crawl to his

sudden, wrathful burst of speed.

Someone shouted loudly. The world of silver and black fled from under Meave as the horse crashed down, and she was flung far out on the soft turf at the side of the road.

Peter, fleeting round the corner, heard the wild yell, slackened speed just in time to see Bargate scramble to his feet, blown and terrified, and to see a black smudge

on the side of the road stir faintly.

"Peter, the rope—Peter!" Meave struggled to her knees; "the rope." She believed that she had been there for hours, that her whole ride had been in vain, and she would see Peter lying dead in the moonlight.

Someone was lifting her.

"I won't be helped, as you've killed him,"stammered Meave. "No, I won't. Oh, Peter—Peter! Where is Peter?"

"Meave, what is it?" It was Peter who was helping

her

"Murder," wailed Meave, "and Bargate and I are dead, but we were in time."

Then she felt the world reel again.

"Bargate is all right, and you will be, but what are

you doing here?"

Listening, Peter heard something scrambling through thorns, and, leaping into the bank, saw two figures scurrying away along a fence; then they disappeared in the shadows.

There was no rope now on the road, nothing to show it had been there. Peter looked carefully when he had heard the story, when he knew, with a shudder, what Meave had risked for him.

"You cared—so much as that?" he whispered; "to ride across those fences in the moonlight to save me?"

"And all the time as I rode I could see that rope," said Meave tearfully, "and felt that I had done it; and poor Bargate's shoulder is all cut—and it was all my fault, all mine."

"And so you'll just marry me when your father comes home, and all your faults will be on my shoulders,"

said Peter stoutly.

Mike Malone, waiting for judgment to fall upon him, guessing and fearing that someone must have overheard or found out, was surprised to find that the matter seemed to have dropped completely, so he was reassured, and planted more cabbages.

"Twas only that wild one, ridin out be chance,"

said Mike.

But later on he decided that the air of America would suit him better than that of Ireland. That was after Meave's wedding, when the bride stopped coming down the path from the church and spoke to him.

"Have you no present for me, Mike?" said Meave

softly.

Mike, flushing fiercely, stammered unreadily.

"I thought you might have had a spare rope," said Meave quietly. "Unless you're keeping it to lend the country when they want it for you in gaol."

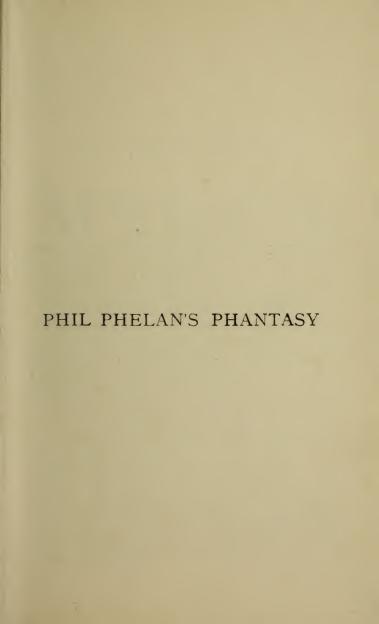
Mike remarked, "God save us!" as he backed away

among the tombstones.

He left the cottage himself after that, but Meave

would not use it. She shuddered at its name.

Bargate's picture hangs on the dining-room wall, crowned by a little silver crescent, and underneath it the words, "Meave's Ride. May, 1912."





## PHIL PHELAN'S PHANTASY

ESELF I think I am for the Germins," said Phil Phelan, leaning on his spade. Phil's attitude through life was to lean when possible, but as he rested he kept watchful eye on the low door of his cottage lest Anastasia Phelan, his old sister, might look out and see him idling. He feared Stasy.

"D'ye say so now?" replied Connor Naylor equably.
"An' you should know, Phil, having travelled far."

Phil had once gone to Liverpool as a labourer.

Phil Phelan's little house stood just outside the wall of the Infantry Barracks at Bally Boggan. In 1915 two regiments were stationed there; the giant grey mass of building, reared in the bleak unattractiveness which marks the homes of the king's men, was cut clear against an amber and opal-hued evening sky. A high wall enclosed the wide irregular square. To the south the town crouched in a hollow, a straggling place, a few factory chimneys still belching smoke; the noise of the trains at the railway station could be heard, faintly distant whistles and puffs.

Phil's cottage crouched beside the high wall. A few flowers protested against Anastasia's industry as they poked up weak shoots in a square flower-bed, their fragrance drowned by the manure heap. A little square haggard ran down to the wide main road leading from Bally Boggan to Cara, and in one corner of it Phil had erected a wooden seat, screened from view by an ill-

clipped arch of thorn.

"I'd say their comin' 'd do no harrum at all," said Phil, languidly earthing up a cabbage; "they'd come frindly, the leaders tells me, an' forgive all that's to be paid to thim Jews of English for the bits of land farmers has bought—the land they lives out of, the craythurs."

They wouldn't be lookin' for it thimselves?" said

Connor dubiously. "For the land, Phil?"

"With all France to plant spuds in, is it likely?" said Phil; "an' other sphots, quare-named that I cannot twisht me tongue round. Don't be argufyin', Connor, but sthep away an' brin' up two pints of porther. Stasy is ironin' within. We'd be gran' min entirely if they jined us here," said Phil, "I'd say, Con."

"Ye think they wouldn't raise the price of yallow male," observed Connor. "We have a sight of hins."

Phil's pig grunted as if in response. It was doing its bit by rapidly getting fat enough to be killed in a stifling little stye some four feet high, which was only cleaned out when there was no room for the pig to get into it. "Keep 'em cosy," was Anastasia's advice.

There was no town between the Barracks and the wide country, only a few rows of villas bordering the main road; one could look across a stretch of bog to a line of hills jutting hazily into the opal dusk, and beyond them the Galtee mountains, indigo blue. On his right Phil could see the silver wealth of the Boggan river and beyond it again a range of hills. The evening was very still, the soldiers were out doing some special work on the drill ground and only occasional voices came from the Barracks.

"Let ye mould up thim cabbages, Phil Phelan, ye wasther!" shrilled a strident voice, "or ye'll get no

egg for ye'r supper."

Stasy," said Phil unhappily. "Here she is."

Phil was a mild, slouching man with a weak mouth and clever eyes, Anastasia a thin viperish woman of over fifty, wrinkled and grey-haired, but as active as a girl of fifteen.

Connor melted away into the shadow of the arch of green. Phil had not been without thought when he

made the shelter.

"I was but passin' the time of day to a neighbour," said Phil with dignity, "an' I have two rows done, Stasy." To which Anastasia replied that if four more were not done before dark she'd know the reason why. Here she retired, flourishing her iron.

"The wimmin, anyways, is managed right by the Germins, said Phil, taking up his spade. "Now what I howd, Con, is that they'd come frindly, disarrum the sojers, maybe, employ the polis thimsilves, an' give us Home Rule. The volunteers an' thimsilves'd be great

at once."

"Ye wouldn't credit thin what they did to the craythurs in Belgium?" said Connor; "shootin' priests an easy-goin' min the same as ourselves, without a

thrial."

"There do be newspaper fellys out there paid speshul to make up all that," said Phil. "I knows. The bloodier they writes the more they gets. The volunteers'll be out soon, Connor, an' I'll try to get up to the race-course to see thim drill. Let ye get the porther anyways, Con, an' I'll convince ye the Germins is the min for Ireland whin ye bring it."

Connor slouched away. A curious mist crept up silver white from the low-lying lands and the river; it eddied to the little garden and the evening was strangely

silent.

An occasional motor honked on the main road or a cart rattled; the Barracks seemed to have gone to sleep. The pig grunted his monologue in his stye and Phil attacked the cabbages; his long narrow spade raised the red earth to the roots and patted it skilfully against them. Phil was proud of his cabbages.

Autumn dusk fell quickly, the mist crept nearer and

Phil grew hot.

He looked cautiously at the half-open door of his house, then longingly down the narrow road which

Connor would return by, and he sat down on the wooden seat-lighting his pipe. The fog dulled sound-the shriek of the trains could scarcely be heard, and the evening grew darker.

"I say they would come frindly," said Phil. "An'——" A motor hooted persistently.

Then he heard tramp, tramp, tramp, the rhythm of

marching feet. Right, left, right, left, right, left. "The volunteers are goin' out," said Phil. "I've one row left to be earthed. If Con 'ud bring the porther . . . God in Hivin—this night!"

For the tramp ceased and out of the mist loomed two huge Prussian officers, splendidly set up, steel helmeted.

their feet crushing Phil's cabbages.

"Have a care of the plants, yer honours," said Phil.

rising. "An' good evenin' to you kindly."

The taller man took out a revolver and put it to Phil's head. "Keep quiet," he said coldly, "schweinhund, or I fire."

"I am frindly to ye Germins," said Phil hastily,

"believin' ye'll come frindly yerselves."

"Then show us a back way into the Barracks," said the man sharply. "Schnell!-idiot. We do not wish to kill the sentry—he might squeal."

"It is Michael O'Brien, me own cousin," said Phil indignantly. "A dacent bye, captain. He is on sentry-

go this evenin'."

"Cannot the creature speak English, Herr Hauptman?" said the second man.

"It seems not, Buelow. It is their wretched ignorance."

"How did ye creep here unbeknownt?" asked Phil,

looking askance at the levelled pistol.

"We seized the train after we had landed and came up here. We'll take the banks and all the money, but we must secure this miserable regiment; my men are outside and more follow."

"An' the river," said Phil; "there is a gunboat below

there."

"Two of our U-boats come to blow her up, idiot. Hark!" said the captain. "We want to get the money."

Phil remembered that he had one hundred pounds on

deposit receipt at the bank. He shivered.

"It's not dacent work, Captain, to be robbin' the

poor," he began.

He stared as a wave of men in grey-green poured into the haggard. The Prussian jabbed him with the revolver.

"An' have a care of that gun. Ye'r finger isn't too stheady," groaned Phil. "Oh, cripes! Stasy!"

"Be off my cabbages!" shrilled Anastasia. "Young

man, git off thim plants, I tell ye."

"Woman," barked the Prussian captain, "silence!"

"I don't know how ye got in, but the polis'll have ye to the lock-up," said Anastasia. "Ye scheemin' foreigners! Two rows ye have thramped down, ye an' the sojers."

Anastasia's attitude was so fierce that the captain

moved to the path.

"Muzzle the creature or shoot her," he said sharply. "Silence, woman! We Germans know how to treat hags such as you."

"If ye're that bitter, someone jilted ye," said Anna.

"Phil, run for the polis!"

A sea of men in grey-green came over the little fence—the cabbages were trampled down for ever and the pig grunted in terror. Phil stood transfixed.

"I am parched," the big Prussian said. "Hag, fetch what drink you have, and after, Vilhelm, kill the

pig and roast it."

Anastasia's shriek reft the air.

"An' her to ate a bag of pollard," she said. "Will ye pay for her, ye thievin' threspassers? Ye an' yer

Kayzar!"

Å hand was clapped over Anastasia's mouth—she struggled free to pull up a broken cabbage and hit the mighty Prussian on the face; covered with earth, he reeled back, cursing in German.

"You have struck a German officer," he breathed, pulling out his sword. "I——"

He turned with outraged dignity. "Kill her when she has prepared her own pig," he said, "and got us our drink."

"There is a bottle of whisky in the press," whispered Phil. "Aisy, Stasy. It's war, an' they wants the town-they're dacent."

Anastasia, struggling wildly, was led away; the big

Prussian turned to Phil.

"You know a way," he said, "schweinhund."

"Phil," cried Stasy. "The polis!"

Phil looked round: he knew the regiment was out.

His friendliness for Germans was wavering.

"Ye could climb the wall there," he said, "into the Fives Court—I have a ladder—an' surprise thim all,

'Gnadige Herr," snorted the Prussian.

"Nady Hare," said Phil humbly. "In there, Nady Hare, but ye'll take thim aisy. Won't ye do no

harrum to thim?"

"We will take them quickly," said the big man; then the artillery and the banks. Also take the provisions—kill the pig when we leave, Vilhelm—and the woman after, if she speaks. What is that? You want another man because her hands will be free, as she is cooking? Zo, we cannot spare one-keep her quiet."

"She is me sisther, Cap-Nady Robbit," said Phil, "an' a bit near in her timper, but—ye wouldn't do her

a mischief."

"Speak English," said the Captain. "Hümmel,

what is a woman!"

Phil thought of peace and was silent. But he thought then of Anastasia's money also in the bank, and he wavered mentally.

The officers moved away to drink Phil's whisky,

Anastasia, her eyes blazing, pouring it out.

Then Phil heard a noise and his name breathed. Two

rows of cabbages still stood erect and green, and crouched down, lying prone, a bottle of porter in each hand, he saw his friend Con Naylor.

"The Germins," breathed Con; "they've come,

Phil Phelan."

"Robin' vilyins!" whispered Phil. "Don't show thim the porther, Con-shlip away-there is one a robbit Captain.

"If there was a robbit hole I'd be down it," whispered

Con.

"Shlip away—git Sergint Casey and Constable Dillon; tell the Artillery barracks. I'll delay thim inside. Hurry on."

"I thought you loved thim," murmured Con.
"An' they goin' to kill the pig an' Anastasia, an' the pig near fat! Hurry on, Con; slip on through Tatty's an' tell no one. A bawl'd do us. S-h-h-h."

"The ladder!" said the Prussian captain, coming

"Get it, fool."

"Yes, yer honour—yer robbit," said Phil. "Two rungs is wake, but if ye sthep aisy it may howld ye." He heard something about "miserable, untidy Irish."

"When we use your country we will teach you order —if we keep any alive. Now—the thing is rotten. . . .

go first, Buelow."

The ladder was put against the wall and the younger officer mounted. Phil, with the muzzle of the revolver jabbed against the middle of his spine, was sent next, but not before he protested.

Then one by one the helmeted men in their grey-green

uniforms swarmed up.

Phil thought of the banks and his money, and of Matt, the pig. He set his wits to work.

"The place is silent," said the big Prussian.

"The officers'll all be in the mess dhrinkin', Cap-Nady Robbit. A quare name entirely," muttered Phil. " Aisy!"

Grey-green shadows, they tiptoed through the haze. The mess-room door was open, the men crouched and rushed in, but the ante-room was empty, the diningroom table laid; no one there.

"The servants'll be in the kitchen," whispered Phil,

hoping for help.

"We want not servants. Karl, pack up the silver; watch the kitchen door. Where now, idiot? Makschell."

The big man turned on Phil.

"Bein' frindly to Germans, I'm doin' me besht," said Phil, not liking the expression in the Prussian's eye. "Didn't I spake up in ye'r favour only to Con Naylor this very day? Dacint min, says I, that'll thrate us dacent, says I, an' lave us our bits of land, says I, Nady Robbit, says I. If ye does me well I could befrind ve, Captain."

'If you do not stop your unintelligent gabble and lead us right you can speak next to the devil," said the

officer crisply.

"The divil such manners!" murmured Phil. "If they are not atin', thin the regiment'll be in the little vard dhrillin', Gineral, for sure."

Phil led the way. He thought it strange that no one

was about.

"They are all gone a-hide," he whispered. "Afeered."
"We have men at either gate; they cannot slip away," said the Prussian uneasily. "Schnell-fool."

Phil tiptoed through the square—the rhythmical tramping sounding behind him. He gambled for time, afraid now.

The mist closed softly on the bleak barracks, veiling their hideousness.

"Now," said Phil. "Here."

But, as Phil knew it would be, the square was empty.

The silence deepened.

"You are selling us-fooling us. Kill him!" said the big man. "Hans! use the bayonet; let someone choke him so he screams not."

He called out some words in German.

A brutal-looking soldier advanced on Phil.

"God above, ye wouldn't kill me!" shrieked Phil. Gineral-Nady Robbit. For God's sake-ye wouldn't do it!"

The naked steel gleamed softly in the mist. A second man advanced with hands ready for Phil's

throat.

"Ye wouldn't! It's a joke! Oh, me God!" Phil staggered back. . . . Death . . . . Death which would come with a hot sear and a cruel choke. . . . Death from those he had spoken for. . . .

"An' not without the priest. . . . Let one of thim run for Father Dan Henessy, Gineral." Phil sank to his knees, and far off he thought he heard a chuckle which sounded like Con's.

"Gineral . . . Oh, ye divils! . . . O God, help me,

Phil Phelan, that has sins on his sowl!"

"Show us then, speedily. One more chance; these men are hiding-show us."

Phil got up, reeling dizzily.

"Ye were sphared a great sin if it wasn't funnin' ye were," he quavered. "Show ye? They are all gone

a-hide, I tell ye."

A sudden thought struck him—the Barrack coalcellar was at the far end of the big square, a grating opening to one of the back streets. It had a strong door. If . . . if . . .

Phil gulped.

"Nady Gineral Robbit," he said, "I knows—they have all run, an' it is into the cellar. There is two cellars, an' surely they'll be in the far one pullin' the gratin' out to get out to the town. Whisht, go aisy!"

"Put that bayonet through him if he lies," said the captain. "Ready, Hans. Now lead on. God, what a

country!"

Hans grunted and pricked Phil joyously.

Phil hurried now. He came to the cellar door. A shovel lay outside it and the padlock was unfastened.

The big Prussian swung round, giving his revolver to the private soldier.

"Shoot him if he stirs," he said, "and we shall slowly hang you to that post there if we are again fooled," he said to Phil.

Sweat beaded on Phil's brow—the agony of death was with him. Kindly soldiers of King George, dictatorial "polis"—he had reviled them, but they would not have hanged him. He put his hands to his throat. Silently the soldiers in grey-green disappeared. He looked at Hans.

"Tin shillins if ye let me off," he whispered. The big stolid German spat expressively.

A whisper was wafted to Phil. He had heard a laugh. He saw Con's face peering over the wall.
"Ye are not so great with ye'r frinds," whispered

"Their boats is cot below."

Phil drew a deep breath. Hans turned, hearing the whisper, and Phil pounced on the heavy shovel. It crashed on Hans' head, that worthy dropping without a groan, and it was but a moment's work to lock the door: then Phil stood back.

"The polis is comin'—that was a thrue stroke," said Con, getting over the wall. "Is he dead, Phil dear?"

"If he has a head an' not a fireproof safe he shud be,"

said Phil.

Crash—roar. A scramble of feet, the stout door bending, and the German officer's voice:

"None are here, Hans. Let us out. Let us out, I

say!"

"Aisy," said Phil; "aisy let ye—Nady Hare Robbit." The German raved—in fluent English he warned Phil . . . . If they were not let out Phil should die in many ways-they would tear him to pieces-they would beat him to bits.

"Well, for frindly ones," commented Con, "the door will go, Phil. Bang!...D'ye hear the gunboat? Their boat is gone."

"And Hans!" yelled the Captain. Schnell."

"Faix, Hans is kilt," said Phil; "the breath might be

in him but no more, Captain, an' ye'll be in the lock-up

yerself soon, whin the Sargint comes."

A muffled roar answered—then the Prussian cajoled. He offered gold, a place in the War Lord's army to his friend.

"The divil much frin'ship I seen in ye!" said Phil, "an' ye threatenin' me, back there. Funnin', were ye? Quare fun to a dacent bye."

When the town was theirs Phil heard how he, the traitor, was to suffer. He would be dragged through it by the feet. His old wife would be hanged . . . they . . .

Con melted away delicately.

The door bent. And as it did, Hans stirred. Next moment he was up, his fingers at Phil's throat; the two swayed, struggling, and the door was giving. Phil fought, but he was small. He struggled for clean breath and was going down when a long shriek rent the air. It must be Stasy's death-cry. Another and another. He heard feet marching-the police were coming. A longer shriek, and he went to his knees just as the door gave and the grey-green figures showed. Blows fell on him. It was death.

"I'll tache ye to shleep!" roared Anastasia. pig out, an' all the gran' cabbages gone ate an thramped. Ye wasthrel, ye—takin' yer aise." The pig screamed again as he tried to dodge a deftly-flung stone.

The mist still clung to the hollows, and the silence of the dull evening was broken by the tramp, tramp of

marching feet, the distant snort of trains.

"Ye're not dead, Stasy?" murmured Phil, a little regretfully. "An' the Germins—God save us, they are goin' to the lock-up."

He rose and blinked. There were no Germans, no

bestial faces, no hands at his throat.

"God be praised! It was a vision," he said reverently. Anastasia very bitterly opined that it was porter.

"It was not, an' Con sneakin' an' not returnin'," said Phil with dignity. "But a vision, Stasy, like the blessed saints were acclimatised to formerly. . . . . Haven't I the feel of the fingers on me windpipe still?"

"Ye have the feel of the rail where ye'r head was lying," said Stasy. "All the gran' cabbage gone, ye

titmouse, Phil!"

"It is dormice that do be shleepin', Stasy Phelan," said Con, coming up the path. He had put down the porter pots under a bush. Phil drew another breath. He looked at the lowlands silver-wisped in mist, at the grey, quiet town, and he heard the regiment coming back and the crisp words of command in the barracks. "Shun!... Dis-miss!"

"Save us, to think I liked thim Germins!" he said

bitterly. "Traitorous dogs!"

His effort to sit down again was marred by Stasy, who hit him soundly on the ear. Let him tidy the

garden now.

Phil fell to work, but life was sweet in him. He smoothed and earthed up with surreptitious rests for sips of porter, and he confided his vision to Con, who listened in awed silence.

"Maybe it was a vision," said Con. "An' the papers

talk the thruth, Phil."
"Maybe," said Phil.

Phil Phelan did not live on at Bally Boggan. He smoked all that evening, deaf to Anastasia's outcries as to extravagance, and next day he took train to Cara and enlisted.

Age Phil waved to one side.

No one knew where he was born, he said, an' he was young enough to do for a few in yelly green before he died. "Do for 'em with the bay'net, though I'd prefer to choke thim," ruminated Phil, looking at his hands.

Phil sits again on the wooden seat, now proud of a D.C.M., but when the mists creep round Bally Boggan he shivers.

"That vision I tuk was a quare thing," he says to Stasy. "Howd yer whisht with yer porther! If I

tuk ye out there ye'd know it wus the reality. Didn't I kill the very same big Proosian I seen here, that would surely have come over if I hadn't, an' taken the town?"

"Ye wouldn't take me word for furriners," returns

Stasy ill-humouredly.

THE END

